NAPOLEON AND HIS SON

NAPOLEON II

Born to command a hundred French regiments, L'Aiglon was dead at twenty-one. The name of Napoleon does not even appear on his tomb. He is referred to simply as:
Franz Joseph Karl, Duke of Reichstadt

NAPOLEON
And His SON

By
PIERRE NEZELOF

Translated from the French
By
WARRE BRADLEY WELLS

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PART THE FIRST

CHAPTER I

A FINE MATCH

THE lesson was over. The music-master put down his baton.

"I suppose Your Highness has heard the news?" he remarked.

The Archduchess Marie Louise pushed her stool back from the piano, on which a Haydn concerto lay open.

"No, I haven't, Kozeluch," she said. "What is it?"

The music-master fluffed up his white muslin cravat. He avoided looking at his pupil as he replied, in a casual tone:

"The divorce between Napoleon and Josephine was pronounced on December 15th last. . . ."

Marie Louise's hand crashed on to the keyboard, striking a plaintive discord.

"The Corsican—he's divorced, you say?"

"It's official, Your Highness. The news was published in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*."

There are some things which, once said, render the atmosphere leaden, dim the daylight, and make misfortune take shape.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the girl, "and I never knew! They won't let me read any newspapers except the *Frankfort Gazette*. . . . Still, I don't see how this divorce can directly concern us. . . ."

"If Napoleon has repudiated his wife," the music-master

went on, "it is, I imagine, with the intention of marrying again."

"I suppose so. . . ."

The threat was becoming more definite. Marie Louise gazed out of the window, with stricken eyes.

Before her, below the palace, flowed the Danube. A few months ago, it had borne along the naked, rotting bodies of soldiers who had fallen at Essling and Wagram. There were, alas, many more Austrians than Frenchmen. On the other side of the river, opposite Buda, the city of Pest spread out fanwise on the plain, bathed in the chilly sunlight of a bright January morning.

Marie Louise felt as though a great shadow had fallen across this limpid landscape. She shuddered, rose to her feet, and walked briskly across the room.

She was a tall girl of eighteen, rather thin, with wedgewood blue eyes. Her long hair, parted in the middle, hung in big clusters on either side of her face. Her forehead was high. Her cheeks were pitted with smallpox and blotched with red. Her lips were thick, but disclosed white, sound teeth. Her chin was heavy, and her figure was neither graceful nor supple.

She came to a standstill before the fireplace, and held out her hands to the fire, as though beseeching it to help her. . . . After a moment or two, pursuing her train of thought, she said:

"Of course, he'll get married again. . . . But there are plenty of princesses in Europe."

Kozeluch smiled and bowed, like a perfect courtier.

"That is quite true, Your Highness. But I assume that he will have the sense to choose the best educated, the best looking, the best in every respect. He will want her not only to give him the heir he desires, but also to make him happy. . . . In all Europe, I can see only one. . . ."

Panting, Marie Louise turned towards her music-master.

"What do you mean, Kozeluch? Have you been told to approach me? . . . It's not possible. The Corsican can't be thinking about me. . . . You go about a lot, Kozeluch. You meet plenty of people. Please tell me what they are saying."

"It's only .rumor, Your Highness," replied the music-master, diffidently, "but I'm bound to say that, in fact, there is a great deal of talk about you. . . . Allow me to add that Napoleon could not make a better choice."

Marie Louise's flesh crept.

"Be quiet! How could I marry that man? I hate him. I despise him. . . ."

She wanted to run away, to escape the danger that threatened her. She was like a hunted animal, sensing the huntsman's approach and trembling with fright and impotence.

"Ah," she wailed, "why didn't Frederick Staps stab him to the heart last October at Schönbrunn? If he had succeeded in killing him, what a deliverance it would have been for the world! No, no, I won't give myself to that man. Look at all the harm he's done to our country, to our house! It's only three months since he imposed a humiliating, dishonorable peace upon us. He's robbed us of Salzburg, Trieste, Istria, Carniola, part of Galicia, most of Croatia, and all our maritime provinces. Now is he going to demand the daughter of the man he defeated? Is he an absolute ogre? Is there no satisfying him? But Papa is too kind-hearted to make me act against my will in a matter which means so much to me."

Kozeluch prudently beat a retreat.

"The Emperor has never sought anything but the happiness of his peoples, and the happiness of his august

children. It is quite obvious that, in this case, Your Highness need have no occasion for anxiety. So I hope you will not take what I have said in bad part. I have simply told you what I have heard: idle rumors, chit-chat, things of no importance."

Marie Louise raised her hand.

"Very well, Kozeluch. You may go. I shall expect you tomorrow as usual. We'll go over that sonata of Mozart's again."

Once she was alone, Marie Louise stood irresolutely for a moment or two, with her arms hanging lax. Then she caught sight of a little white dog asleep on a cushion beside the fireplace.

She knelt down, took the dog in her arms, and suddenly burst into tears.

"Tisby!"

The little dog, thus rudely awakened, recognized her mistress. She put out her tongue and started licking Marie Louise all over the face, lapping up her big, warm, salty tears.

"Good dog, Tisby! Did you hear what he said? They want to marry me to the Corsican, and I'm barely eighteen! Only eighteen! But it will never happen. Papa won't make me marry that devil. Papa loves me. He won't make me break my heart. He won't spoil my whole life. He's so kind-hearted. I'm his favorite little girl; and he knows that I adore him, not only admire him."

She stopped for a moment. Then, with revolt bursting out of her all at once, she cried:

"I was so happy! ... Why should that man Napoleon ever have thought about me? He's a butcher! He's a monster! He's a usurper! He's anti-Christ himself!"

In a fury, the Archduchess Marie Louise spat three

times running into the fire, by way of averting misfortune.

Indeed, the members of the House of Austria in general, and its head, the Emperor Francis II, in particular, had good reason for grievance against Napoleon.

For nearly fourteen years the Emperor Francis had been fighting against Napoleon. The drubbings which the damnable Corsican had inflicted upon him were by now almost beyond counting. Every battlefield in Europe had seen the Austrians in their great-coats in retreat, pursued by the bayonets of Ney's infantry or the sabres of Murat's cavalry.

Even this would not have been so bad, but for the fact that, whenever peace was patched up, the Corsican ogre sat down to table and gobbled up some part of the Austrian Empire in big mouthfuls.

At Campo Formio, he swallowed the Netherlands, the left bank of the Rhine, and Lombardy. At Lunéville, he made a meal of Tuscany and a large part of Italy. At Pressburg, he finished off Italy and started on Germany. At Schönbrunn, he went on in the same way, still with fine appetite. Another feast like that, and nothing would be left of the Austrian Empire but crumbs.

Vienna was overflowing with princes and archdukes, allies of the Imperial family, whom that cursed Napoleon had driven out of their kingdoms or their duchies. At their head figured Francis's own aunt, Marie Antoinette's sister, the Queen of Naples, Marie Caroline, a woman too temperamental, though with a head on her shoulders, who had been forced in 1806 to surrender her throne to Joseph Bonaparte.

The Emperor of the French, indeed, excelled at juggling with thrones and duchies. When he got tired of

playing with them, he tossed them away to those around him, just as he might throw largesse to the poor. Then it was a question of who could catch them: his brothers, his sisters, his friends, or his generals, all barely rid of the mire of beggary. A man who yesterday had been a groom sat down today as master in a palace, the steps of which he would not have been thought good enough to sweep in normal times.

Besides, to ruinous demands there had been added hurts to proper pride. There were so many of these that the Emperor Francis had given up trying to keep exact count of them. But some of them had left their mark upon his memory as a sovereign.

After Austerlitz, he had been forced to go in person and sue for peace in his conqueror's camp. This same conqueror, in 1806, had wrested from him the crown of German Emperor. The title of head of the Germanic Holy Roman Empire, the title of spokesman and temporal head of Christendom, which his ancestors had borne ever since 962—the Napoleonic storm had swept it away, as it had everything else....

Then there had been those inglorious flights before the victorious invader. Three times Francis had had to bolt from his capital, like a hare with a greyhound after it.

The last misadventure of this kind was quite recent. Marie Louise still kept the memory of it in her mind: a memory both vivid and burning....

It was due to the intrigues of her step-mother, the Empress Maria Ludovica, the Emperor Francis's third wife. Her whole family had been driven out of Italy and ruined by the French. She was very small, and all made up of fire and passion. She held her husband through his senses, which are always a sure rein with which to ride a man. She hated the French, and plotted their downfall.

The hour of her revenge seemed to have struck. Napoleon was at grips with the Spaniards, and had even suffered a defeat at Beylen. With the help of England, Austria formed the Fifth Coalition.

But the Emperor of the French was too quick. The ogre shod himself with seven-league boots. On April 20th 1809, he was at Strassburg. By the 24th he was at Ratisbon.

At the news of the battle of Eckmühl, Marie Louise clapped her hands. She wrote to her father, gaily:

"They say that Napoleon was present at this big battle which he lost. May he lose his head too!"

But despite the Austrian victory, Napoleon threatened Vienna. Once more the Imperial family had to pack their trunks. They scattered in all directions. The Empress Maria Ludovica fled to Buda, taking Marie Louise with her. This was on May 5th. It was wet, and the roads were quagmires. The ladies reached Hungary half-dead from fatigue.

Then came the news of the battle of Essling. Once more it was an Austrian victory.

"This is the first time," wrote Marie Louise, "that Napoleon has been beaten in person."

But Buda in its turn became unsafe. The French, ever victorious, were approaching. Would it come to taking refuge in the Antipodes in order to escape them?

The fugitives and their suite made their way to Erlau, a little town situated on a tributary of the river Theiss. There they camped, almost eaten alive by bugs. The Empress fell ill, and so did Marie Louise herself.

At length, after the battle of Wagram, all the Imperial family came together again at Buda, where they awaited events. On October 14th, peace was signed at Vienna. Then arose the question of returning to the capital, where Napoleon was still installed at Schönbrunn as master.

At the mere idea of finding herself face to face with him, Marie Louise nearly fainted.

"That would be a torture worse than all the martyrdom we have endured," she cried.

This plan remained in suspense. Only the Emperor Francis returned to his capital, where he was greeted by the cheers of his subjects. All the other members of the Imperial family remained at Buda, where they passed their time very pleasantly with driving and music and dancing.

Marie Louise found a perfect partner in the person of the Archduke Francis, her step-mother's brother. He had a fetching beard, sang charmingly, played duets on the piano with her, and waltzed like a young god. What more could one want to set the heart of an Archduchess beating faster?

But, just when she might have thought that she and her family were delivered from Napoleon, the shadow of the terrible Corsican fell upon her, like a net over a bird. She had given up thinking about him; but he had been thinking about her....

Marie Louise felt that she was lost. She knew him. If he said: "It is my will," the thing was done.

Must she be the victim offered as a sacrifice to the Minotaur?

Only one hope remained to her. She put her trust in the Emperor Francis, "the best of fathers."

She did not yet realize that, while his heart was paternal, his bowels were political....

CHAPTER II

THE SACRIFICE

On January 23rd 1810, in the morning, the Emperor Francis arrived in Buda unexpectedly.

At the news of his arrival, Marie Louise felt her knees giving way under her. Only a matter of importance could have taken him away from Vienna and brought him here at such a time.

A few minutes later, she stood before him, trembling all over. She stared at him, stricken.

He was clad all in gray, as usual: a gray frock-coat open over a gray waistcoat; gray breeches tucked into high boots. No emotion was registered on his long, melancholy, florid face.

For the first time, Marie Louise fancied she could catch a glimpse of a retiring, shrinking soul behind his mouth, with its thick, loose lips; his high forehead, with grey hair growing back from it; his deep blue eyes, with heavy pouches beneath them.

"My child," he said, "I have a serious subject to discuss with you."

"I am listening, Papa," stammered Marie Louise.

"You are doubtless aware that Napoleon divorced his wife last month. . . . He is in search of a princess whom . . ."

Marie Louise did not let her father finish.

"Father," she cried, in a horrified voice, "I know what you are going to say... But I can't marry Napoleon, I can't, I can't!..."

"Nothing is decided yet," the Emperor put in, gently. "Don't alarm yourself unnecessarily. We have not yet received any official request...."

"But it may arrive at any moment. For that matter, there is no need for such a marriage. We shall soon be rid of the Corsican. A Viennese astrologer has read in the stars that he is going to die this year of cholera, in Cologne, at an inn called the 'Red Crab.'"

The Emperor did his best to smile. He took his daughter by the hand and drew her to him.

"Let's be serious, Marie Louise... I will not hide from you the fact that Napoleon is indeed thinking about you."

"Oh," cried Marie Louise, "surely you're not going to make me marry him?"

"I have no intention of putting any compulsion upon you, my child. But, in the circumstances in which my Empire is at present placed, I find myself forced to ask you to help me."

Aghast, Marie Louise gazed at her father. She had counted on him to protect her. She found him foremost in readiness to sacrifice her.

But she still refused to contemplate such sacrilege, such a crime against nature. She would fight till she had exhausted all her arguments, all her strength.

"Have you really reflected about this, Papa? How can you agree to give your own daughter to the leader of the Revolution, the usurper whose people guillotined your aunt, Marie Antoinette? Don't you know that these French are worse than the Huns? They have expelled God from their country and massacred their priests. In our own countryside they have laid everything waste

with fire, sack and slaughter. They have not spared even the monasteries. Last year in the Tyrol they threw four monks into a furnace. At Schwechat they pulled out the Capucins' beards. At Lanzendorf three monks died because of their treatment.

"Then their leader, that Attila, has done violence to the Pope. He keeps the Pope prisoner. He mocks at being excommunicated. For that matter, don't they say that he turned Turk in Egypt? . . . He beats his servants. He kills his generals when he's not satisfied with them.

"No, no, Papa! You can't make me marry a man like that. Have pity on me, I beseech you! . . ."

Marie Louise flung herself to her knees. She crouched on the floor, weeping and wringing her hands.

Gently the Emperor lifted her up. He brushed back the hair from her tear-stained cheeks.

"My child," he said, with a sigh, "for people like us, for kings and princes who have nations in their care, marriage is not an affair of the heart. It is an affair of State."

Marie Louise stared at her father in surprise. These were strange words from a man who, apparently, was conjugal before all else, and who claimed that happiness was to be found only in marriage.

Despite appearances to the contrary, the Emperor Francis was a terror of a husband. He had already been the death of two Empresses. He had exhausted the first within two years. He had procreated thirteen children, not counting miscarriages, in seventeen years of marriage with his second Empress, Marie Louise's mother, who died in 1807. He was now gradually wearing out Maria Ludovica, his third Empress. He had married her after a widowerhood of nine months, which he found unendurable.

"So you say marriage is an affair of State, Father?" Marie Louise replied, in a tone of voice which had sud-

denly become firmer. "Then why do you want to give a daughter of your House, the most ancient House in Europe, a daughter of the Habsburg family, which has known no misalliance in ten centuries, to an adventurer who represents nothing, a Corsican of dubious birth, and the bitterest enemy of Austria, which he has robbed of her best provinces?"

The Emperor looked away in embarrassment.

"You are still too young, my daughter," he said, in a hollow, harsh tone of voice, "to understand much about political affairs. But let me tell you that nobody has more hatred than I have for this man, for his country and for its Revolution, whose offspring have defeated us, derided us, dispossessed us.... We are not strong enough for them on the field of battle. But there are other weapons! You are one such weapon; and we count on you."

Marie Louise hung her head. She felt overwhelmed in advance with the weight of the responsibility which threatened her.

The Emperor's voice rang more gravely as he went on speaking slowly. It was the voice of the head of the State. He spoke of the confidence which millions of families placed in him.

"I emphasize, Marie Louise, that it is you who must overcome the Revolution.... Think it over, my child. I do not wish to put any compulsion upon you; but on your decision will depend the greatness, the whole future, of our House...."

Marie Louise stiffened. Another argument came into her mind.

"And suppose I refuse? Suppose I prefer to go into a convent? ..."

"I know you too well, my daughter. You will not refuse. You will not shrink from your duty.... But if,

by chance, you should take a decision so contrary to the interests of your country, you would put us in a cruelly embarrassing position. . . . Metternich has virtually given his word. He is committed . . ."

"Ah, Metternich!"

Marie Louise shuddered. The mere mention of that name made a chill run down her back.

Was not the Chancellor the real master of Austria? Who could resist the will of that all-powerful Minister? His fixed stare, seeping beneath his lowered lids, froze you to the heart and set even Archdukes stammering in his presence.

Marie Louise was vanquished.

"Very well, Father," she said. "I shall do as you wish . . . I am ready to sacrifice my personal happiness for the good of the State."

The Emperor was touched. He stroked his daughter's hair.

"I did not expect anything else from you. I know how high-minded you are. . . ."

All at once, Marie Louise flung her arms around her father's neck. She was a sentimental young girl. As she had listened to waltz music by moonlight, she had often dreamed of a Prince Charming. Her whole soul rose to her lips in revolt.

"But still, Papa," she murmured, "Napoleon! . . . Why, he's as old as you are!"

It was her final flicker of rebellion.

The Emperor smiled.

"He's a year younger, my child," he corrected, gently. "After all, that's better than nothing, isn't it? . . . And now you may go back to your brothers and sisters."

Docilely, Marie Louise obeyed. She felt exhausted, and her head was burning.

In a neighboring room there were sounds of a disturbance. Marie Louise's brothers and sisters, ranging from Ferdinand, who was sixteen, to Marie Anne, who was four, were gathered around a big table. They were playing at soldiers. Whole rows of French grenadiers strewed the battlefield, bearing witness to the superiority of Austrian generalship.

"We've won!" cried Marie Leopoldine. "They're all dead!"

Marie Louise did her best to smile. Then she swung round, exclaiming.

Francis Charles, who was seven, had thrown into the fire one of the finest dolls she possessed, and was poking at it eagerly, laughing for all he was worth.

"Have you gone mad, Francis?" demanded Marie Louise. "What are you thinking about, burning my doll like that?"

The boy turned round, planted himself in front of her, and answered, proudly:

"Leave me alone, little sister! Can't you see I'm roasting the Corsican?"

He expected a box on the ear. He was very much surprised to find himself lifted up in the air and kissed, as Marie Louise's voice murmured into his ear:

"Ah, child, if you only knew how much good you've done me!"

Definitely beaten, Marie Louise laid down her arms. Since it must be so, she would become the wife of Anti-Christ.

Yet her sacrifice meant paying a cruel price. She would have to leave her country. She would have to give up Francis. He would have made a perfect husband for her, and she was on the point of falling in love with him....

Isabey

MARIE LOUISE

Second wife of Napoleon and mother of the King of Rome

She would be going away from her family, perhaps forever. Never again would she go to the Anchau meadods to gather veronica and make tea with it. Never again would she water the flowers in her garden which she herself had planted. There would be no more walks in the Schönbrunn woods, no more fishing for crabs. And who would look after her turtle-doves and the hare she had tamed?

Everyone of these thoughts was like a stab in the heart to her. But who among those around her was capable of understanding her, sympathizing with her?

Even her great-aunt Marie Caroline, the ex-Queen of Naples, dethroned by Napoleon, treated her marriage as a joke.

"So I'm going to become the great-aunt of the Devil, am I?" said Marie Caroline, with a chuckle.

CHAPTER III

"I MUST MARRY A WOMB..."

At last the act from which Napoleon had shrunk for so many years was on the point of being accomplished.

On his return to the Tuileries from Schönbrunn, at the end of October 1809, he had made up his mind. He would break with Josephine.

She had lost her looks. She was showing her age. Napoleon knew that, before she settled down, she had betrayed him over and over again.

Yet force of habit, her appeal to his senses, tender memories of their youth, still kept him strongly attached to her. It was Josephine who had taught him the delights of love. She was Napoleon's lucky star, his talisman of fortune. He appreciated the help she had given him in all circumstances, as well as her shrewdness, her subtlety, her tact, her intelligence.

"She would never get over it. It would be the death of her," he said to himself.

Besides, what was the good of divorcing Josephine and marrying again, if he was incapable of procreating a child?

Still, he must think about the future. To whom would he leave the Empire? In default of a natural heir, Napoleon contemplated adopting one. His desire to establish a dynasty demanded that his family traits should be found in his successor to the throne. Then his brother, Louis

Bonaparte, married to Hortense de Beauharnais, had a son by her: the first male child born to the family. Napoleon decided to choose little Napoleon Charles as his successor.

Everything now seemed settled, and Josephine imagined that she could end her days peacefully as Empress. But at this point various things happened.

In 1806, Napoleon had a brief love-affair with a reading-woman of his sister's, Caroline Murat, and of this adventure a son was born, who was the living image of him.

A few months later, on May 5th, 1807, Napoleon Charles, little "Nonnon," his heir-presumptive, died at The Hague, carried off by a malignant fever.

At about the same time, in Poland, Napoleon made a conquest of fair, sweet Marie Walewska. This fresh love affair served to alienate him still further from Josephine.

Meanwhile, warnings of Fate seemed to become more and more imperative.

At the battle of Ratisbon, Napoleon was wounded in the foot. A little later, at Schönbrunn, the student Frederick Staps was seized just as he was about to plunge a knife into Napoleon's breast.

These events set the Emperor of the French thinking. He was at the mercy of a bullet or a dagger; and France and the Empire were at their mercy too.

Finally, on his departure from Schönbrunn, Madame Walewska, who had joined him some months earlier, told him that she was about to become a mother.

Sometimes, when he was tired, or at night, when he could not sleep, Napoleon questioned himself.

For whom was he laboring? For whom had he turned the world upside down? For whom was destined this colossal edifice which he had fashioned by his genius, built by cannon-shot, and cemented with the blood of a score of nations?

If he died, what would become of his achievement, his gigantic Empire, embracing France and part of Germany and Italy, stretching from the Tiber to the Elbe? What would become of its feudatory States: Naples, Spain, Holland, Würtemburg, Westphalia?

Was it all for nothing that he had dismembered and ruined Austria, despoiled Prussia, crushed Russia, driven the Bourbons out of Spain, and deprived the Pope of the Papal States and shut him up in Savona?

Apart from England, that island shivering with terror, what country in Europe could boast that it had never known the hoofs of his hussars' horses, the wheels of his cannon?

Was nothing to be left of him, of his flesh, of his mind, of his life? Was the grave, was death, to make an utter end of him?

His family? Napoleon knew them well enough....

His brothers were envious nobodies, whose ingratitude sometimes bordered on treason. His sisters were women dominated by their senses, by ambition, by petty questions of precedence. There was not one among them who did not imagine that the wealth, the place, the power that Napoleon had given them were due to their own merits. There was not one among them capable of carrying on his work. If he died, all these people would tear one another to pieces, and there would be a general collapse.

Ah, how furiously, how frantically, he had sometimes longed to have a son of his own! What would he not give to be like a humble farmer who, as he added one field to another, could say to himself:

"I can be easy in my mind. All this will go to my son. I shall not have labored in vain."

And now, all at once, the face of the world was changed

for him. He was capable of procreating a child. He had proved it twice over.

All was not yet lost. He would divorce Josephine. He would marry again. A son would be born to him....

He would perpetuate himself. He would outlive himself. What he dug in history, in Time, would not be a hole soon filled up again, but a furrow in which his seed would germinate, from which life would spring of itself.

Now it was not simply because of himself that he must break with Josephine. It was because of the one hundred and thirty departments of France. It was the sixty million people in Europe in allegiance to him. It was his whole Empire, which refused to die....

Though he had made up his mind to divorce Josephine, Napoleon did not disguise from himself how hard the task was to which he was setting his hand.

The sentimental side of the matter struck him as not the least delicate. He shrank from inflicting pain upon his life's companion.

He went on wrestling with himself. It was as though some obscure force, a kind of instinct, kept him bound to Josephine. But reason of State had spoken. He must act.

In the first place, he must break his two-fold link with Josephine: the civil link, the religious link. Despite all her tears, all her hysterics, the Empress had to bow to his will.

On December 15th, 1809, Josephine gave her consent to a divorce. The next day, a decree of the Senate pronounced the dissolution of the civil marriage. Then, on January 10th, 1810, diocesan authority annulled the religious union.

Napoleon was free. Now he had to choose a new Empress.

For a time, he played with the idea of marrying Lolotte,

his brother Lucien's daughter. But she was his niece, and she was only fifteen.

So he gave up this idea, and thought about Princess Charlotte of Bavaria, sister of Eugène de Beauharnais's wife. But a sense of the ridiculous held him back. How could he become the brother-in-law of his own step-son?

Then he offered the Empress's crown to Marie Walewska. She refused it.

Napoleon made the best of that. Marie, that pure, sweet soul, would still remain his refuge in bad times. Her fidelity, her affection, would be balm for weariness and depression.

In view of these circumstances, he decided he would choose the princess who would bring the most advantage to his Empire and furnish the strongest support of his policy.

Above all, he would choose a woman whom he might confidently expect to bear him children.

"I must marry a womb," he put it to Champagny.

So the Minister for Foreign Affairs sought for a suitable womb. The Courts of Europe were not lacking in such wombs, and very noble ones too. Three candidates were lined up: a princess of Saxony; the Grand Duchess Anna, youngest sister of the Czar Alexander; and the Archduchess Marie Louise, eldest daughter of the Austrian Emperor.

In fact, ever since 1803 Austria had been contemplating a matrimonial alliance with France. In 1807, after Tilsit, Metternich had offered an archduchess to Napoleon; but at that time the Emperor of the French had gibed at the idea. Marry a grand-niece of Marie Antoinette, whose blood was scarcely dry in the Place de la Révolution! He could not think of it. What would the people say, with their memories still vivid with pictures of Danton, Marat,

Robespierre and all those famous fellows who had cut off Monsieur Capet's head?

Personally, Napoleon inclined towards the Russian marriage. On November 22nd 1809, Champagny instructed Caulaincourt, the French ambassador in Russia, to ask Alexander for one of the Grand Duchesses. Once the letter was dispatched, Napoleon waited impatiently.

But, after all, he must be prepared for a refusal, and, in that case, he must save his face. As it happened, at the end of November Metternich made another approach to him. The Emperor Francis was still ready to bestow an archduchess upon the master of France. Napoleon lent ear to this offer and did not say "No."

For that matter, such an alliance would be well regarded in aristocratic circles. Josephine herself was in favor of it. She would feel less humiliated if a Habsburg princess replaced her on the throne which she had had to abandon.

At length, two months later, on January 26th, the reply from Russia arrived. It played for time. The Czar took refuge behind the will of the Empress-mother, who alone had the right to dispose of her daughters.

Promptly, without loss of time, Napoleon fell back on the Austrian marriage. An archduchess would do better, after all.

The House of Lorraine, grafted on to the Habsburgs, went back to the Tenth Century. It could count its ancestors over a period of nine hundred years. For the last three hundred years—an alluring example!—it was in Austria that the Kings of France had sought their Queens.

And how fertile were these Austrian archduchesses! Francis I and Maria Theresa had had sixteen children. Francis II, the present Emperor, had thirteen. As for Maria Theresa's daughters, Marie Caroline of Naples had brought seventeen into the world, and Marie Amelie of

Parma six. To be sure, Marie Antoinette had had only four; but then, look at her husband! These girls were certainly child-producers.

Napoleon made his decision. Let it be put in effect at once!

It was Eugène de Beauharnais whom Napoleon instructed to make the necessary overtures for replacing his own mother, Josephine. Everything must be done within forty-eight hours. The Emperor of the French could wait no longer.

On February 6th, in the morning, Eugène presented himself at the Austrian Embassy. Schwarzenberg was out hunting. He was sent for. Eugène explained to him what Napoleon wanted. The marriage-contract must be drawn up within the next few hours. Marie Antoinette's marriage-contract would serve as a model!

The Austrian ambassador was frightened by the suddenness of this decision. He had no definite instructions; but could he let slip such a fine chance? Putting a bold face on the matter, he took everything upon himself. The marriage-contract would be ready at the required time.

Meanwhile Napoleon had summoned the Grand Council in extraordinary session. This time he monopolized the meeting. The others had nothing to do but nod assent.

"I am going to marry the Austrian archduchess," announced Napoleon. His tone was such that everybody answered: "Agreed."

On the next day, February 7th, the draft of the marriage-contract was signed at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. It was at once dispatched to Vienna by courier.

Henceforth Napoleon was all impatience: not because he doubted the Austrian Emperor's consent, but because he was in a hurry to get everything finished.

As early as the morrow of February 7th, he concerned himself with Marie Louise's trousseau and wedding-presents. He gave orders that nothing was to be made in Vienna. Everything would be sent from Paris. The Empress of the French must be dressed entirely by France.

At the same time, he took into consideration his future family. Marie Louise would give him children, and, most important, a son. He could have no doubt about that. So there must be a settlement for this heir of his.

Napoleon could pick and choose in Europe as he liked. On February 17th, 1810, a decree of the Senate stated that the Prince Imperial would be called the King of Rome.

Rome, the second city of the Empire! Of course, the Pope might protest; but Napoleon long since held him in his pocket. As for Eugène, who was to have inherited the Kingdom of Rome, he would receive the Grand Duchy of Frankfort in exchange.

For that matter, it was deliberately that Napoleon had chosen this title. His son would reign over Italy and Germany. Thus would be reconstituted in his favor the Germanic Holy Roman Empire, of which Napoleon's future father-in-law, the Emperor Francis, had been so dramatically dispossessed in 1806.

It was his sister Caroline, the Queen of Naples, Murat's wife, whom Napoleon entrusted with being present at the official handing-over of Marie Louise to the French authorities and escorting her to Paris. Caroline would make arrangements for the journey. But, before that, she must choose the trousseau and the presents.

"Let no expense be spared!" said Napoleon.

Caroline hastened from shop to shop. Napoleon kept an eye on everything. He examined every article, and insisted on its being packed before his eyes.

The shoes, especially, interested him, entranced him. He had a fancy for small hands and small feet....

Those of his future wife must be minute, if he was to judge from the shoes intended for her. They were of black and white satin; taffeta; rose, blue and green morocco; dark red velvet embroidered with gold and silver, and hemmed with swansdown and mink.

Napoleon held them up in the air and turned them round and round. He imagined the little foot that would fit into them, the slim ankle, the calf rounding out and running up to the smooth knee, the line of the thigh developing and becoming lost in mysterious shadow.

"They are a good augury," he said.

In his turn, the great dress-maker, Leroy, presented himself. He brought ten ceremonial dresses, including the wedding-dress, which cost twelve thousand francs, and in addition frocks of every kind and for all occasions.

It was Biennais, the famous goldsmith, at the sign of the "Green Monkey," who provided requisites for the teeth, the toilet, and the dressing-table, reading lamps and scent-jars. Nor did he overlook chamber-pots and bidets, though these were not in gold, but in silver-gilt, as befitted one who was not a Sovereign, but merely a Consort.

Then Napoleon had to think about jewels.

He counted upon a stream of precious stones, upon dazzling, dream-like toilet sets, to put him into Marie Louise's good graces. He knew that his future wife had been inculcated with hatred for the Corsican, and that he had to overcome her repulsion for him.

She would be hard to please if she remained unsatisfied. Trousseau, jewels and presents all together cost over five million francs.

CHAPTER IV

MARRIAGE

FRAU LAZANSKY, Marie Louise's lady-in-waiting, handed the Archduchess the first love-letter Napoleon had yet sent her. Marie Louise trembled as she opened it, as though it were a Pandora's box from which she might let loose a fresh flood of calamity upon the world.

The letter read:

"MY COUSIN:

"The brilliant gifts which distinguish your person have inspired Us with the desire to serve and honor you by addressing Ourselves to the Emperor, your father, and begging him to entrust Us with the happiness of Your Imperial Highness.

"May We hope that you will welcome the feelings which have led Us to take this step? May We flatter Ourselves that you will not be moved solely by your duty of obedience to your parents?

"If Your Imperial Highness's feelings should embrace any partiality for Us, We are determined to cultivate it so assiduously, and to make pleasing you in all things so constantly Our care, that We flatter Ourselves that We shall some day succeed in making Ourselves agreeable to you.

"Such is the goal which We aspire to reach, and We beg Your Imperial Highness to favor Us in Our pursuit of it.

"With these presents, We pray God, my cousin, to have you in His holy keeping, as you deserve.

"Your good cousin,

"NAPOLEON.

"At Rambouillet, February 23rd 1810."

As she read this letter, Marie Louise felt a sense of relief. She liked its unaffected tone, bordering upon the unceremonious. Might her "good cousin" be less of an ogre than people generally made out?

"One can't call his style elegant," she admitted to Frau Lazansky, "but his letter has a nice turn of phrase. I should never have thought him capable of such an achievement."

Now that this letter had been delivered, Napoleon's envoy, Berthier, who had slowed down his journey, could present himself in Vienna. He entered the city incognito on March 4th, by way of a road and a bridge constructed with all haste across the ruins of the bastions demolished by the French cannon-balls.

The next day, he made his official entrance, in a procession consisting of a single carriage, with five *aides-de-camp*, mounted on black horses, trotting behind it.

The festivities lasted three days. Then, on March 8th, at the Hofburg, there was a formal audience at which Berthier presented to the Emperor Francis Napoleon's official offer of marriage. The Prince of Neufchâtel proceeded to hand Marie Louise a letter from Napoleon and a medallion bearing his portrait.

"With my father's permission," Marie Louise declared, "I give my consent to my marriage to the Emperor Napoleon. . . ."

Then Frau Lazansky pinned the medallion to her bosom on the proper side: the side of her heart. Before she did so, Marie Louise studied the portrait closely. It was set in

thirteen large diamonds, which did not detract from the person it represented.

"He has a fine face and an imposing presence," she told her lady-in-waiting.

Napoleon's letter, too, was in a most seemly strain.

"MADAME MY SISTER:

"The granting of the request which I made to His Majesty the Emperor, your father, to unite me to you in marriage is a very precious mark of the esteem and consideration which he extends to me.

"Your most affectionate brother:

"NAPOLEON."

From Napoleon's cousin, Marie Louise had become his sister. She was making progress.

She questioned Count Otto. Would the Emperor let her have a little garden of her own? Would he let her have lessons on the harp? Would he let her take Frau Lazansky with her to Paris?

The ambassador smiled and reassured her. Napoleon was kind-hearted. His one desire was that she should be happy.

On March 9th the signing of the marriage-contract took place, followed by Marie Louise's solemn renunciation of her rights to the Austrian throne. In the evening, at the Grand Theater, there was a gala performance of *Iphigenia In Aulis*. It was a happy, topical choice, since it showed Agamemnon taking Iphigenia to Aulis for the purpose of being sacrificed there.

On March 11th, the marriage was celebrated with great pomp in St. Stephen's cathedral. As his proxy, people were pleased to note, Napoleon chose his old adversary, the Archduke Charles.

The next two days were spent in banquets and other festivities. Then, on the 13th, at eight o'clock in the morning, Marie Louise and her escort left Vienna.

Twelve ladies-in-waiting, twelve chamberlains and three hundred other persons, packed into eighty-three carriages, accompanied the new Empress.

Marie Louise took leave of her family in the Privy Council chamber. It was an hour of despairing embraces, sobs and vows of remembrance. Then she tore herself away, with tears streaming down her cheeks.

For that matter, the Emperor Francis accompanied her as far as Saint Polten, where the party arrived that night. Marie Louise's last dinner with her father was a melancholy occasion. The next morning, after going to Mass, she said good-by to him.

"I shall strive for your happiness and my own," she sighed.

She could not have summed up a better program in fewer words.

That night Marie Louise slept at Ems. Her "handing-over" was to take place on French territory, at Braunau in Bavaria. There the French escort awaited her. It included all the most aristocratic members of the Imperial Court. As in the case of Marie Antoinette, a pavilion—erected by the engineers of Davout's corps—had been set up for the ceremony.

The Empress reached Braunau on the 16th at eleven o'clock in the morning. She was much affected. To keep up her courage, ever since the 11th she had read Napoleon's last letter to her over and over again. She had received it on the day of her marriage. Napoleon had written comforting words:

"MADAME:

"This letter will be handed to you after the celebration of our marriage.

"All the letters which reach here from Vienna speak only with admiration of your fine qualities. I am ex-

tremely impatient to meet Your Majesty. If I consulted only myself, I should set off at full speed, and I should be at your feet before anybody knew that I had left Paris. But this may not be.

"The Prince of Neufchâtel will be at your orders during your journey. My sister Caroline wishes to keep you company. Receive her with friendship. She is very good to me.

"I have but one thought, which is to know what you would wish. Concern to please you, Madame, will be the most constant and the most charming duty of my life.

"NAPOLEON."

But now Marie Louise had to face the French, and she was somewhat timid of them. The ceremony, however, passed off without a hitch, in accordance with the etiquette laid down for the handing-over of Marie Louise.

Caroline took charge of her sister-in-law, kissed her, and introduced her to her household, headed by Madame de Montebello, her lady-of-honor. She was a fine woman of barely thirty, with the face of a virgin and the carriage of a goddess, wearing with superb grace her mourning for her late husband, Marshal Lannes.

Then, one after the other, before Marie Louise, bowed Madame de Luçay, her lady of the bedchamber; her ladies of the palace; her gentleman-of-honor; her master of the horse; her chamberlains; and her pages. It was a procession which took fully two hours.

Next Marie Louise seated herself with Caroline in a carriage drawn by eight white horses, which took her to Braunau. She made her entrance into the town to the sound of cannon, and was the recipient of all the honors due to the Empress.

But here she had to undergo a fresh trial. She must take off all her Austrian clothes, even her chemise and her stockings, and put on one of the French outfits which had

been brought from Paris for her. The wife of the Emperor of the French might not move a yard in her new fatherland clad in foreign finery.

Her women busied themselves around her, bedecking her, beribboning her, dressing her hair and powdering her. They took two hours over it, and she left their hands with a raging headache. She looked at herself in a mirror and made a wry face. Naturally, for she found herself only too much like these chattering, scented Frenchwomen who intimidated and frightened her.

Her journey continued at full speed over bad roads, for Napoleon was in a hurry to make his wife's acquaintance. At every halt, there were receptions, festivities, galas, banquets. Marie Louise had to listen to speeches, had to smile, respond and look her best. She was tired. Every night she went to bed with a band of pain across her brow.

At Munich she had to bear a fresh blow. Caroline insisted that Frau Lazansky, Marie Louise's lady-in-waiting, should be sent back to Vienna, though she knew how attached her sister-in-law was to her. Napoleon's orders were explicit: get rid of everything Austrian. Nothing escaped this anathema: not even Tisby, Marie Louise's little Viennese dog, to whom she had promised to show Paris.

"The Emperor loathes dogs," Caroline said, in her grenadier's voice. "He won't have one in the palace."

Marie Louise must bow to his will. Frau Lazansky took the little animal back with her, and a bit of her former pupil's heart, too. A little later, Marie Louise wrote to her former lady-in-waiting:

"Tell my dear Papa that I pluck up my courage every day."

She needed all her courage, and she implored God's help to fulfill her duties to the end.

On March 19th, the Imperial procession reached Ulm,

and on the 20th Stuttgart. On the 22nd, it crossed the Rhine at Kehl.

"Good-by, Germany!" cried Marie Louise, with her big blue eyes full of tears.

Two days of festivities, two nights of illuminations at Strassburg, and the Imperial procession set off again. On the 24th it reached Lunéville. Here it was met by a page who had ridden full speed from Compiègne. On behalf of the Emperor, he handed Marie-Louise a parcel, with feathers sticking out of it. It was accompanied by a letter. In her distress, she found unexpected comfort in it.

> "... How happy I shall be to see you and tell you all the affection I feel for you! Yesterday's courier informed me that you had caught cold. Take care of yourself, I beg of you. I was out shooting this morning, and I send you the first four pheasants I brought down, in token of the service so rightly due to the Sovereign of all my innermost thoughts. Why can I not be in my page's place, and take my oath of fealty to you, with one knee on the ground and my hands in yours? But imagine that I am. In imagination, too, I cover your dear hands with kisses."

Marie Louise's little heart was touched. She read over again the end of the letter which she had received the day before.

> "Laborde, who has just arrived from Vienna, tells me that you wept bitterly after you left Saint Polten, and that you were in tears again at Munich. This distresses me; for it is my wish that Louise should never have anything but days as beautiful, tender and charming as herself.
>
> "Caroline sends word to me that you very much want to know how to make me happy. I myself shall tell you this secret, Madame. It will strike you as simple, and yet it is quite true.

"Be really glad that we are married. When you feel inclined to give way to tears, when you are depressed, say to yourself: 'This will make the Emperor very sad; for he cannot be happy and contented unless his Louise is happy.' "

Was this not pretty enough? Nothing was lacking but moonlight and a nightingale.

With tears in her eyes, Marie Louise found in Napoleon a troubadour about whom the world knew nothing. His guitar had a string which rang romantically, and he played it like a virtuoso.

After all, Corsica was not so far from Italy....

CHAPTER V

WARLIKE LOVE

EVER since February 23rd, the day when he received from Vienna official acceptance of his proposal of marriage to Marie Louise, Napoleon had lived in a state of fever.

In Vienna his wife was making ready to join him. She set off. She was on her way. She was approaching Paris. Napoleon must make sure that she got a proper reception.

He flung himself into preparations for it. He supervised the arrangement of the apartments reserved for the Empress. He gave orders about the placing of the furniture. He regulated the ceremonial. He tested the safety of staircases up and down which processions would pass. He settled Court festivities and popular amusements. He granted amnesties to mark the occasion. He mobilized painters, poets, playwrights, engravers. He hurried everybody. Nobody must waste a moment. He anticipated everything, thought about everything, saw to everything. He might have had ten minds all working at once.

He was enraptured. He could not sleep.

Was it all a dream? He had been an impoverished young gentleman, whose education at Brienne had been paid for by the King, who owed everything to the King; he was now seated on the very throne of that once all-powerful monarch; and he was about to marry a descendant of the Emperor Charles V and of Louis XIV!

To be sure, he was well aware of his own worth. He was the offspring of Fame. His victories took the place of ancestors, and his quarterings of nobility were inscribed upon the standards which he had captured from his enemies.

But how far he had traveled in eighteen years! How remote was the time when he had blackened the seams of his clothes with ink in order to conceal his poverty!

He had been a junior lieutenant of artillery. Now he was renewing the tradition of the Kings of France. Like Francis I, Louis XIII, Louis XIV and Louis XVI, he was marrying a Habsburg. He was becoming the grandson, the son-in-law, the nephew of Emperors. This marriage would raise his throne to the level of other thrones, buttress it upon a line of Caesars, anchor it in past centuries, link it with other dynasties, of which it would henceforth form a part.

But there was even more than this. Among her ancestors Marie Louise could reckon thirteen Bourbons. So her son and Napoleon's would have in his veins the blood of the Kings of France. He would be more or less legitimatized.

Not for a moment did Napoleon stop to think that, for several generations, the Bourbons had been degenerating. What matter? The blood of Napoleon would change all that, as it had already changed the face of the world.

How could he help loving the girl who brought him such an apotheosis? He never tired of gazing at the portraits of her which he had been able to procure.

Dear Marie Louise, how true to her race she was! Yes, she was indeed a Habsburg, from the crown of her head to the sole of her foot.

She had the Habsburgs' jutting jaw, their eyes set rather far apart, their slightly flattened nose. Above all, she had their lower lip, that famous Austrian lip which was, so

to speak, the trade-mark set on its daughters by the most ancient House in Europe.

Napoleon gazed with delighted eyes at these stigmata, which, in the case of anybody less exalted, would make a fiancé uneasy.

Now he must leave Paris and betake himself to Compiègne. Tradition bound him. It was there that Louis XV, at the head of his whole Court, had received the Dauphine, Marie Antoinette. Napoleon could do no less for Marie Louise.

At Compiègne his mania for organization took possession of him again. He had Kashmir shawls hung in the bath-room reserved for the Empress. On his way through Diana's Gallery, he frowned. What was this he saw? Pictures representing defeats which he had inflicted on the Austrian armies! Away with them at once! If there was no place to put them, let them be burned! Austria was henceforth sacred to him.

Ah, how slowly the time passed! Meanwhile, every day Napoleon learnt fresh details about his wife. Not one of them failed to enchant him.

How strict, how complete, had been her education! She knew German, English, Spanish, Italian, French and even Turkish—for you never could tell, could you? She painted tastefully. She sang. She played the piano. She excelled in making corsets, purses and bell-pulls.

And how innocent she was! In Vienna she was allowed no male domestic animals, the books she was given had whole passages cut out of them, and her lady-in-waiting never left her day or night.

It was a virgin who was on her way to Napoleon. Until now, he had known only women who were married or whose amorous adventures were countless. In Marie

Louise's case, he would be the first. The thought touched him. . . .

She had everything to learn. When the time came, would he prove a good teacher? Certainly he would, for this virgin possessed a final attraction: she was blonde and fair-complexioned. That was the type Napoleon preferred. . . .

And what a dear little heart she had! With emotion, Napoleon read over again a letter which Marie Louise had written some years earlier to her governess, Madame de Colloredo, on the occasion of the death of her father, Monsieur de Crenneville:

> "My dear Colloredo:
>
> "Be comforted, you are always so good to me, do me this kindness and be comforted soon. When I grow up, I shall do my best to take the place of your father."

Napoleon sought to stay with pictures the hunger which he already had for his Louise. He had received a fresh portrait of her, sent him by Maria Ludovica. He studied it for hours, comparing it with medallions of the Habsburgs which he had brought away from Vienna with him. He questioned everybody who arrived from Vienna:

"What is she like?"

One day Colonel Lejeune, who had been present at the marriage ceremony, arrived at Compiègne. In the course of an evening at the theater, he had made a sketch of the future Empress.

"Show it to me!" cried the Emperor.

He seized the sheet of paper with shining eyes, darted a glance at it, laid it down again, and clapped his hands.

"Ah," he exclaimed, "there is the Austrian lip all right!"

Meanwhile he could not keep still. Would she never come? He quivered with impatience, and did not know what to do with his time. He went coursing, galloped

through the woods for hours, killed hares by the dozen, and came back soaked with sweat, followed by his escort with their tongues lolling out like those of a foundered pack.

When he was back at Compiègne, other anxieties beset him. What figure would he cut in Marie Louise's eyes? Would she not be disappointed in him? She might imagine that he was a barbarian, a savage.

His blood boiled at the idea. Quick, let Léger, Murat's tailor, make him a Court suit. Let it sit to his figure and set him off. Let it be embroidered with gold and spangled with diamonds. He would be no mere husband. He would be a star from head to foot: a star whose function was to dazzle.

After finery came fine manners. Napoleon learnt dancing. His step-daughter Hortense and Stephanie of Baden gave him lessons in the waltz. He revolved till he made himself giddy. No matter, it was for Marie Louise!

She was his one thought. He sent her flowers and game. Almost every morning he wrote to her, and the "N" with which he signed his letters dilated like the plume of a triumphant cock.

At last! In two days, or three at the most, Marie Louise would arrive.

But now the thought of his first meeting with Marie Louise worried her husband. He was all nerves. He knew that this first meeting would be decisive for the future of their married life.

How could he conquer his wife? As a great general, he knew the value of audacity, the advantage which one can derive from surprise.

"As at Austerlitz," he said to himself, "I'll trust to the inspiration of the moment."

On March 27th, 1810, Napoleon was in his study at Compiègne. With his hands behind his back, and his head down, he walked up and down the room. Seated at a small table was his private secretary, Ménéval, a man with a little round head, an infantile mouth and big ears. He waited, pen in hand. From time to time, the Emperor stopped and scratched one leg with the heel of the other foot.

"Ménéval," he asked, "is everything ready at Soissons?"

"Yes, Sire. The crimson and gold tents have been erected."

The Emperor's tone of voice became more imperative.

"You're sure nothing is lacking? I want everybody to be at his post. I have regulated the ceremony of the Empress's arrival minute by minute. The least delay, the least hitch, may have unfortunate results. The troops are on the spot?"

"Yes, Sire; and the meals are ordered. Monsieur de Bausset has done everything necessary."

"And my room is ready?"

"Apartments have been reserved for you at the Hotel de la Chancellerie."

Napoleon went over to Ménéval and took him by the ear.

"You realize, Ménéval, that it would be contrary to the rules of seemliness if I stayed under the same roof as the Empress for the first night? She is not yet altogether my wife. I respect her, Ménéval."

"Of course, Sire," agreed the secretary, who, with such a master, had learned to say "Yes" more often than "No."

At this moment a courier was announced. He came in covered with mud and sweat, his eyes dark-rimmed with fatigue.

"Sire," he said, "a letter from Her Imperial Majesty."

Napoleon snatched the missive from him, tore it open, and devoured it with his eyes. After a moment or two of silence, he shouted:

"Constant! Ho there, Constant!"

His valet hurried into the room.

"Go and fetch me Murat."

A few moments later, the King of Naples, a tall man with a big head crowned with frizzled hair, entered the study.

"Murat," said Napoleon, "the Empress left Vitry this morning. She will soon be arriving at Soissons. Get ready. We shall start in an hour."

His brother-in-law bowed and withdrew. Napoleon turned to his valet.

"Constant, order a carriage without livery or arms, and then come and dress me."

A little later, stripped to the waist, he cried, gaily:

"Rub away, Constant, rub away, and don't spare the eau de Cologne! Come on, harder—as though you were rubbing down a donkey!"

He flung out orders as though he were launching an assault on a city.

"My uniform of the riflemen of the Guard. . . ."

When the uniform of green cloth with red trimmings was laid out before him, he reflected and added:

"And my gray greatcoat—the one I wore at Wagram. . . ."

Finally he was ready. Murat was awaiting him, and the carriage drove up. Napoleon slapped his brother-in-law on the back.

"She's coming, Murat, she's coming!"

He turned to Méneval.

"Above all, don't tell anybody I'm not here. Nobody must know where I am. . . ."

The horses set off at a gallop along the road to Soissons. Suddenly it began to rain. The rain drummed on the hood of the carriage. They passed through Soissons, and the carriage turned into the Vitry road. It went on raining. The downpour smudged the landscape, almost blotting it out.

What matter? It was a fine day, nevertheless. Napoleon had so much sunshine in his heart that there was none left for the sky. He hummed to himself, keeping time with his foot. He sucked aniseed candies. He craned his neck to survey the horizon.

"Murat," he said to his brother-in-law, jovially, "we're both going to meet our wives. Aren't you glad you're going to see Caroline again?"

But the King of Naples, who had had no time for lunch, was sulky and pretended to be asleep.

At Courcelles, the carriage stopped to change horses. When the Emperor and Murat got out, it was raining harder than ever. The two of them took shelter in the church-porch. The wind and the rain lashed their faces. Murat growled glumly. He thought the weather beyond a joke.

Suddenly, a courier rounded a bend in the street. Napoleon hastened to hear his news. The Empress would be there in a quarter of an hour.

A quarter of an hour? It seemed like a century. Napoleon stood in the middle of the road, heedless of the rain which soused him like a spaniel. Ah, there was a noise in the distance! A big berlin, drawn by eight horses, drove into the square. It was she!

Napoleon hurried forward and signed to the postilions to stop. A squire who was riding beside the carriage recognized him and lowered the foot-board.

"The Emperor!" he cried, thinking he was doing the right thing.

Napoleon flung the tactless fellow a black look. Then, shivering, but with shining eyes, he plunged into the carriage.

"Louise!"

A little cry like that of a bird caught in a trap answered him. Napoleon caught Louise in his arms, pressed her to his heart, and covered her with kisses.

"Louise! At last! How glad I am to see you! . . ."

His avalanche of caresses left the Empress breathless. Caroline came to her help. She separated husband and wife, and made them sit down opposite one another.

For the time being, they said nothing. Napoleon held his wife's hand in both his hands and gazed at her eagerly.

He did not notice that she had a bad figure. He did not realize that her legs were too short, and that her big bosom was out of proportion to the rest of her body. He had no eyes for anything but her pink and white skin, her blue eyes, her pretty, fluffy, fair hair, her nose and, above all, her lips.

His dream was before him, come true. Napoleon fell in love with her. He was in ecstasy.

"How happy I am!" he exclaimed.

Marie Louise, on her side, studied him with surprise.

What, was this the Corsican about whom they had told her such terrible things? She was almost astonished that he had not horns on his head, canine teeth sticking out of his jaws, and claws in place of nails. . . .

No, he was just like any other man: indeed, much better-looking than most men. His dark blue eyes were at the moment as soft as velvet. His shapely lips disclosed white teeth. His nose was straight. His chest was deep. His complexion was pale gold.

Marie Louise also admired his small ears, which any woman might envy.

"You're not afraid of me any more?" asked Napoleon.

Marie Louise shook her head, and smiled at him. She pointed to the medallion which she wore pinned to her bosom. With a strong German accent, she murmured:—

"Do you know, you're much better-looking than your portrait?"

They were the first words of hers Napoleon had ever heard. They thrilled him. He could scarcely speak.

"What tiny hands you have!" he said. "And your feet—I've never seen such tiny feet...."

At this moment, the carriage set off again. Napoleon leant out of the window and shouted to the postilions:

"Straight to Compiègne!"

The order was passed on along the procession. It spread astonishment from carriage to carriage. What about the halt arranged at Soissons? What about the reception which had been ordered? What about the dinner? But so be it. Whip up, postilions! The Emperor's will was no matter for argument....

The procession went ahead at full speed. In the Imperial berlin, husband and wife continued to improve their acquaintance. Marie Louise coughed.

"Have you caught cold?" asked Napoleon, anxiously.

"I've got a delicate throat," replied Marie Louise.

"We'll see about that first thing tomorrow. Corvisart shall take care of you. He's a prince among doctors. He could raise the dead."

The drive went on, with the rain falling harder than ever. At Soissons, the assembled authorities flung up their hands to heaven as they saw the procession whirl through like the wind. They had to swallow their speeches, roll up

their banners, and stuff fifty of themselves with a dinner cooked for three hundred people.

Napoleon cared little about all this. For the moment, all he was thinking about was making Marie Louise happy.

"I've given orders," he said, "that you are to have sweets and pastries served at every meal, and fancy biscuits for your tea. . . ."

Marie Louise clapped her hands.

"Oh, I love sweets!"

"You may send your family any presents which you think they would like. Don't stint yourself. You've plenty of money in your purse."

Marie Louise was touched.

"You're very kind. . . ."

"And of course," Napoleon went on, "you will have your choice among the best music-masters and art-masters. . . . Not to speak of flowers, dogs and birds. . . . You have only to say what you want."

"Can I have some turtle-doves?"

"Of course. We'll teach them to coo."

Marie Louise blushed; but she plucked up courage to murmur:

"And can I have a nice husband?"

"A husband who would rather die than cease to please you."

Marie Louise thrilled at the caress in Napoleon's deep, demonstrative voice. She felt more and more at ease. Outside, night had fallen, and the procession made its way by the light of torches.

At half past nine it reached Compiègne. Napoleon jumped out of the berlin, and gave his hand to his Empress to help her out.

A crowd awaited them. Napoleon made short work of this nuisance. Within two minutes he had hurried through

family introductions, clipped the wings of choristers, and brushed aside little girls presenting bouquets.

Why couldn't they leave him alone with his wife?

Amid all this hubbub, Marie Louise could not see her way very clearly. Nevertheless, as Madame de Montebello led her to her apartments, she said to her:

"The Emperor is very charming, very gentle, for such a dreadful warrior. I think I'm going to be very fond of him, now I've met him."

An order from the master sufficed to improvise a dinner-party in Marie Louise's apartments. The company numbered only three: the Emperor, the Empress, and Caroline.

It was a gay meal. Marie Louise drank champagne, and found it to her liking. When they came to dessert, the Queen of Naples took herself off, and husband and wife were left face to face.

Napoleon looked at the clock. Midnight!

He reflected that he ought to be on his way to the Hotel de la Chancellerie, where his bed awaited him. He listened. The trees in the park bent and groaned under the weight of the squalls. Outside, there was the rain, there was the wind, there was the cold....

Inside here, everything was warm, everything was bright everything was cosy.

Napoleon looked at his wife. She had stretched herself out on a couch. There she lay languidly. The light from the chandelier set off the pink and white of her skin. It cast a halo round her fair hair.

"Louise?" he queried, anxiously.

"My dear?"

"What did your parents tell you?"

Marie Louise lowered her eyes. In a small voice, she murmured:

"They told me to be all yours, and to obey you in everything."

Napoleon sprang to his feet. He went to the door, opened it, and dismissed everybody. Then he shut the door and locked it.

He needed nobody else. Tonight, he alone could take care of his wife....

He crossed the room towards her. Marie Louise felt no fear as he approached her. His eyes shone like stars....

Napoleon had ceased to be the Emperor. All at once, he was again Lieutenant Bonaparte, who had initiated fair ladies of Marseilles, Nice and Toulon if not into love, at least into republican liberty. He had recovered all his fire, all his passion, all his spirit.

The next morning, Marie Louise awakened to find Napoleon's brown head on the pillows beside her.

One preliminary conviction imposed itself upon her. The job of being an Empress had nothing unpleasant about it. At least, it had made a promising start.

Napoleon, God be praised, was not like the last Bourbon of France, who married Marie Antoinette at the age of sixteen and waited seven years before tasting the joys of marriage.

Marie Louise had not yet got over her surprise. Could this be the wolf of whom she had been in such fear: this wolf who had eaten her up so delightfully?

Meanwhile Napoleon got up. He was exultant. He felt ten years younger. He wanted to let everybody share his happiness.

He went out of the room and encountered Duroc, the Grand Marshal, his friend and confidant.

"Marry an Austrian girl, my dear fellow," he said to

him. "They make the best wives in the world. They are as good as gold, and as innocent and fresh as roses."

Napoleon ordered breakfast for two to be served in the Empress's bedroom, and went back to his wife. He found her sitting up in bed, writing.

"I'm sending a letter to Papa," she said. "Would you like to read it?"

Napoleon took the sheet of paper, and at once these lines leapt to his eyes:

> ". . . I get on very well with him, and he loves me deeply. For this I am very grateful to him, and I respond to his love with all my heart. I find that he gains greatly on closer acquaintance. He has a charm which is most taking, and is so ardent that it is impossible to resist him."

Napoleon smiled.

"Another announcement of victory," he said to himself. "What a pity that I can't publish it in the *Monitor!*"

CHAPTER VI

HONEYMOON

On March 30th, a procession of four hundred carriages escorted Napoleon and Marie Louise to Saint-Cloud, where their civil marriage was celebrated early in the afternoon of April 1st. The next day, about ten o'clock, in brilliant sunshine, all the members of the Court got back into their carriages to return to Paris, where the religious ceremony was to take place.

Abandoning for the occasion the carriage drawn by eight white horses which was reserved for her, Marie Louise seated herself beside Napoleon in the Coronation coach. Her Court dress and train of silver net sparkled with diamonds, and she wore the heavy crown which had already adorned Josephine's brow.

Beside her, Napoleon shone no less resplendently. He wore a velvet hat with feathers and diamonds, and he was clad in white satin, trimmed with gold and brilliants at all the seams. Around his neck hung the great necklace of the Legion of Honor.

The ceremony took place in the Square Salon at the Louvre, transformed into a chapel under Fontaine's supervision. Its decoration, suggested by the painter Isabey, was white taffeta picked out in gold braid. Cardinal Fesch, Grand Chaplain to the Court and Napoleon's uncle, officiated at the ceremony.

After the singing of hymns and the *Te Deum,* the procession returned to the Grand Gallery. Then the day's program rolled along with the regularity of a watch-spring. There was a review of the Guard. Then, at six o'clock, there was a banquet in the Grand Auditorium, where the Imperial family ate in public. This was followed by a concert, and finally there was a fireworks show, of which little was to be seen because the wind beat down the smoke. Finally only one formality remained to be accomplished: the blessing of the bridal bed.

At last even that was over. Marie Louise was married, and she could take off her crown. She was so tired that she could scarcely see.

Meanwhile the populace gave free rein to their delight. They were not admitted to the official festivities, but they were given the wherewithal to fill their bellies: there were pastries and sausages by the thousand, legs of mutton and chickens by the hundred. Fountains of wine flowed for them all day long in the Champs-Elysées, where a fair provided them with such edifying games as greasy poles, breakneck-ladders, and slippery slides.

Towards evening, in the hope of seeing their master and new mistress, the populace prowled round the Tuileries. All at once, a window opened, and a man appeared on the balcony. It was Metternich, who was dining with Regnaud de Saint-Jean d'Angély, Barante and some others in one of the Council of State rooms. He had a glass of champagne in his hand. He raised it aloft, and, in a thundering voice, shouted to the rabble:

"To the King of Rome!"

The rabble responded with cheers:

"To the King of Rome!"

Then they took themselves off to gape at Madame Furioso, who was staging a luminous wire-walking act. By this

Rouget

THE MARRIAGE OF NAPOLEON AND MARIE LOUISE

time, indeed, the whole city was illuminated. Thirty-six thousand braziers transformed the Tuileries into a bonfire. Everywhere arose dazzling porticos, flaming arches of triumph. The Champs-Elysées and the Pont de la Concorde crackled with sparks. Over all the public monuments hovered allegories in fire. Peace uniting husband and wife shed flames over the Legislative Assembly building, and above Notre Dame blazed a temple of Hymen.

The people of Paris could scarcely believe their eyes. They were sorry they had seen so little of the bride to whom they owed all this fairylike display. Meanwhile they amused themselves wholeheartedly. They danced, they drank, they sang. Sometimes, as is usual with the populace, their songs lacked reverence:

> "We've sometimes seen such marriages
> Beside the Seine's water.
> First you trounce Papa,
> Then you truss the daughter."

The next day golden pieces and silver medallions were thrown to the people. In the afternoon, in the Throne Room, Marie Louise listened to speeches from the Senate, the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State. She received homage from ministers, cardinals, generals, prefects, mayors. In all, fifteen hundred persons were presented to her. Again she went to bed with a headache.

The festivities went on for three days. Finally, on April 5th, the Court set out for Compiègne. Marie Louise imagined that there she could have a rest. She did not know her husband. The next three weeks were all taken up with hunting, receptions and bewildering processions of new faces.

At length she and her husband could start on their honeymoon. As a delicate attention, Napoleon had chosen

for it precisely one of the provinces which he had wrested from his father-in-law. They were to pay a visit to Belgium. Incidentally, Napoleon was eager to show off his new Empress to the people. He was proud of his wife, and he did not mean to let anybody overlook the fact that he had married an archduchess.

On April 27th, the Imperial couple, followed by a numerous escort, set off for the north in a berlin drawn by eight horses. They passed through Saint-Quentin and Cambrai. They stopped an hour at Valenciennes for lunch. Finally they reached Brussels.

In every town at which they halted, they had to pass under triumphal arches, listen to choirs, receive acclamations. They got up at five o'clock in the morning. In the afternoon, they had to give audiences and visit monuments and factories. At night, there were plays, fêtes, balls. They went to bed at midnight, only to begin all over again the next day.

Even at midnight, Napoleon insisted on helping himself to large slices of honeymoon.

Half unconscious, Marie Louise simply let herself be swept along by this hurricane. Amid the crowds whose one desire was to make her happy, nothing melted her. It never seemed to enter her head that a smile, an attention, a word in the right place, a present tactfully offered, might help Napoleon's cause. In Brussels, since she remained tongue-tied, the Emperor had to speak on her behalf.

Despite himself, this attitude on the part of Marie Louise forced Napoleon to remember the wife whom he had repudiated. What a contrast with dear Josephine, always smiling, always gracious, who never failed at any moment to do just the right thing to win all hearts!

At length it was time to return to France. The return journey was made at full speed by way of Ghent, Bruges

and Ostend. Everywhere the new Empress received her ovations with an unsmiling face. Dunkirk, Boulogne, Dieppe—all these places passed by without her deigning to unbend.

On June 1st, she and Napoleon arrived at Saint-Cloud.

"This time," thought Marie Louise, "I'm going to have a bit of my husband all to myself."

A fresh disillusionment awaited her. A progam of entertainment was arranged for the whole month. Fêtes alternated with galas, reviews with hunting.

But all this fine hubbub did not stop Napoleon being the most devoted, the most attentive of husbands. "Husband," indeed, is scarcely the right word. That depressing word usually suggests strictness, routine, boredom. "Lover" would be a better word. It was a lover that Napoleon wanted to be, and a beloved lover.

He had but one object in life. It was to attract his wife, to seduce and win her mind as he had won her body.

This was no hard task. Marie Louise was docile. Having been brought up strictly, she found conjugal discipline light. She was quite content to lead a quiet life in her inner apartments, with her lady of honor, her lady of the bedchamber, and her attendants, who guarded her as though she were in a harem.

She was responsive to the smallest attention, and Napoleon was prodigal in attentions. If Marie Louise ever imagined she was marrying a veteran, she was soon undeceived. Napoleon had cross-examined himself from the start, like this:

Might Marie Louise think him not sufficiently smart? Promptly he ordered well-cut silk suits, fine shoes that set off his shapely feet, on which he prided himself.

Might she think him a bit old? On the spot, Napoleon turned back into a boy. For Marie Louise's benefit, he or-

ganized games of prisoner's base, ballooning and hide and seek at Rambouillet and Saint-Cloud; and in all these games he held his own. He taught her to ride horseback and he trotted on foot beside her, to catch her if she fell. In the evening, when there was no formal entertainment, the Emperor of the French played blind man's buff and hunt-the-slipper with his wife and their courtiers.

Marie Louise had become the center of Napoleon's world. He was always after her. He interested himself in her dresses and her hats, and went into ecstasies over the drawers which she had made for herself. She brought this fashion with her from Vienna, and it was she who first introduced drawers into French feminine attire.

Napoleon urged her to spend money; for he knew that dressmakers and luxury traders were lamenting.

"Things weren't like this in Josephine's time," they complained.

But Marie Louise had heard how extravagant her predecessor had been, and how angry Napoleon had been about it. So she took good care of her dresses, and discarded few of them. If this was bad for trade, it couldn't be helped.

Napoleon loaded her with jewelry. Nor did he stop there. He was all attentions to his new family. Carriages full of presents set off for Vienna. There were presents for Papa, for Maria Ludovica, for Marie Louise's brothers, for her sisters, for her uncles, for her aunts, for her friends.

Everything Austrian became dear to Napoleon's heart and sacred in his eyes. He insisted on getting rid even of the memory of the defeats he had administered to "Papa Francis," which were commemorated all around him in stone and bronze. Metternich, the Austrian minister, was the object of his special favor. He housed him, fed him, entertained him. He presented him with a mansion, Sèvres porcelain and Gobelins tapestry.

But all this was nothing. Napoleon knew that his wife was completely happy only when he was with her.

When they were at the Tuileries, he often left his own simple apartments, and, by way of a dark, little staircase, so narrow that the fat King of Bavaria had become stuck in it, went down to the Empress's apartments. Sometimes he watched her unseen, and was touched by what he saw.

Marie Louise might be embroidering or sketching. Or she might be performing, to the great delight of her women attendants, the sole parlor-trick at which she excelled. By a clever contraction of her jaws, she managed to make one of her ears describe an almost complete circle.

When Napoleon entered, the women scattered with little squeaks like those of a brood of mice on the appearance of a lion. But the lion was soon tamed. Marie Louise took possession of him, played the harp or the piano for him, and showed him her embroidery. Docilely, Napoleon looked, listened, admired. If Marie Louise wanted to sketch him in profile, he sat still as long as was necessary. Did he ever remember that he had refused to pose for David or Gros for five minutes?

He was at his wife's orders. He waited without impatience when she was late. Hunting tired her so he gave up hunting. She wanted to play billiards. He played against her, was beaten, and took lessons in order to give her a good game. If she wanted to go for a walk, he was there, prompt to the minute, ready to escort her.

Hitherto he had eaten his meals at odd hours, by himself. Seated at a round table, and using no napkin, he would dig into the dish with his hands and dip his bread in the sauce. Within ten minutes, he had gulped down his fricassee of chicken and drunk his half bottle of Chambertin.

Then, on Corvisart's advice, he had progressed to the extent of taking a quarter of an hour over his meals.

"Such is the corrupting influence of power," he had complained.

Now, to please his wife, he took his meals with her. They were served soup, entrée, joint and sweets. Napoleon took two hours over dinner and as long over supper, and sometimes he had tea with the Empress as well.

He could refuse her nothing. Often he deferred his own desires to the wishes she expressed. Once he said to her:

"Louise, come and sleep in my room."

But the Empress knew that there was a fire in her husband's room all the year round.

"No," she replied, with her German accent, "it's too hot."

Napoleon resigned himself to going down to his wife's room. There, feeling chilly, he ordered a fire to be lit. The Empress's attendants hastened to light it.

"Put it out!" cried Marie Louise. "Put it out!"

The attendants obeyed, and the Emperor raised no objection.

For that matter, he deferred to his wife on more important occasions. Knowing her to be jealous, he visited Josephine and Madame Walewska only in secret. It was no particular credit to him that he showed himself a good husband; for such sacrifices were sweet to him.

He loved his wife. She appealed to him physically. He had acquired a taste for her firm young body, which answered so well to his own. He multiplied his overtures, with the inspiring object of having an heir as an excellent excuse. He devoted so much conjugal zeal to this end that Corvisart, seeing him haggard and wan, was driven to intervene.

"Sire," he said, "beware of excess! You are forty-two.

You are no longer a young man. Besides, you exhaust yourself in ruling the Empire."

Napoleon smiled. He scarcely thought any more about ruling the Empire. Affairs of State bored him. He yawned when he attended the Council of Ministers. The news from Spain was bad, and his presence there was essential. But that would mean going away, leaving Marie Louise. Napoleon could not bear the thought of tearing himself away from her charming body.

At the other end of Europe, Russia in her turn seemed to be awakening. To the Devil with Russia! The Emperor had nothing in his head but love.

But his love for Marie Louise, instead of being a stimulant, was like too heavy an oil. Little by little, it fouled the wheels of the great machine which Napoleon had constructed and of which he was the heart and soul. If he stopped, the machine would go on working wheezily for a moment or two, and then it would stop in its turn. Should he not think more about its working?

But meanwhile he let himself be held love's prisoner. Marie Louise was now in a position to measure her power over him.

"I'm not afraid of Napoleon any more," she told Schwarzenberg, "but I'm beginning to believe that he's afraid of me. . . ."

She was happy. She lost no time in thanking her father for having refused to give way to her entreaties and the tears she had shed at Buda six months earlier.

Henceforth, like Omphale, she could regard her Hercules as her private property. She would not let him go away from her, or concern himself for too long with anything else but her. The slightest prolonged absence of Napoleon from her side produced a scene.

One day Napoleon was detained in his study by urgent

business. He sent a message to Marie Louise to apologize for keeping her waiting. She received it, opened it, read it, and collapsed into the arms of Madame de Montebello, with tears streaming down her cheeks.

"He won't be here for an hour," she wailed. "Alas, it's all over. He's deserted me!"

CHAPTER VII

PREGNANCY

EVERY day Napoleon questioned Corvisart, his physician, and the famous midwifery surgeon Antoine Dubois, Baudelocque's rival. He plied them with interrogations. He tried to extract a statement from them.

"Well, is she pregnant? Do you really think she's pregnant? Tell me the truth. I'm quite capable of standing it."

Prudently, the doctors confined themselves to hypotheses.

"We think so, Sire.... But we must wait before we can be sure."

Waiting, still more waiting! Two weeks passed. Finally, the event was confirmed for the Imperial couple's private ears. The Empress was pregnant.

Napoleon was so delighted that he could not keep the news to himself. On July 16th, he announced it to the Austrian Emperor, "my brother and very dear father-in-law." Soon it was everybody's secret.

Marie Louise began to feel unwell. Napoleon wept with emotion. He had always had a horror of pregnant women; but this time the case was different....

He was eager to show off his capabilities to his good people. He paraded his wife all over Paris. The Empress was to be seen at the Opera, at the Salon, at the National Library, where she insisted on trying on Francis I's helmet and nearly put her eye out.

Napoleon scarcely left her side. The Eagle watched over her as though she were a hen with a chick. She mustn't be tired. She mustn't be annoyed. She must have everything she wanted. Napoleon laughed heartily when she told him that she had given a musical watch to her brother-in-law Borghese, and—a more subtle joke—that she had cut a brush up fine and put it into the bed of Pauline's unhappy husband.

Time went on, and her pregnancy ran its normal course.

Seized with a strange scruple, Napoleon did not wish his repudiated wife to learn from anybody but himself about the impending birth of an heir. On September 14th, he wrote to Josephine:

> "MY DEAR:
>
> "I have received your letter of September 9th. I am glad to hear that you are well. The Empress is definitely four months pregnant. She is well, and is much attached to me."

At the end of September, the Court settled down at Fontainebleau. In the intervals between hawking and playing billiards, Napoleon thought about making arrangements for his future son's life.

For a son it was going to be. He was certain of that. Fate, whose hand he had so often forced, could not refuse this last demand of his. Was he not lord of the world? When he frowned, kings jumped to attention like simple soldiers, and Pope Pius VII himself came to heel as fast as a whistled spaniel.

Napoleon was happy, and he wanted everybody around him to be happy too. His joy must receive solemn sanction. Quite naturally, his thoughts turned to pregnant women and new-born children. Should he give away alms, as the Kings of France used to do when a Dauphin was born? He owed it to his fame to go one better.

He proceeded to turn the Society for Maternal Charity, hitherto a private affair, into a State institution. He endowed it handsomely, in order to provide poor mothers with funds for taking care of their children and feeding them. Napoleon also concerned himself with abandoned children and orphans. He instituted inspection of all orphanages, and issued decrees providing for everything. Baby-clothes, nursing, boarding-out, apprenticeship—nothing escaped him. Finally, he founded six schools for the education of orphans of legionaries who had died in the service of the State.

This was not all. Napoleon made provision for the future.

When his son became Emperor in his turn, he would want generals, ministers, diplomats. He would choose them from among men who at present were still children. Would it not be politic to create an immediate link between the King of Rome and a certain number of children: a link strengthened by gratitude, which would be some guarantee of their fidelity and their devotion?

Napoleon adopted a number of children, gave them his own name, and organized a great baptism for them. The ceremony took place on November 4th at Fontainebleau, amid pomp calculated to appeal to the people's imagination.

Some days earlier, the Minister of the Interior had announced Marie Louise's pregnancy to the prefects. At the beginning of November, it was related to the President of the Senate, and then officially to the Austrian Emperor. On November 11th, Napoleon requested the bishops to order prayers for the Empress's happy deliverance.

Henceforth all France could rejoice. Everybody was required to celebrate the great event: senators, prelates, parish priests, poets, song-writers. The official Muse tuned her lyre to suit the street-corner:

"Thanks to Hymen, thanks to Love,
Louise shall have a son.
So her bosom, so her shape,
Announce to everyone."

Still the people remained cold. They had little liking for the Austrian Empress, and they looked back with regret to Josephine, who was at least a Frenchwoman. War-taxes weighed heavily on their shoulders, and every day the burden became harder to bear. Glory could not be cut up for food. Bread was needed on which to spread it.

Meanwhile want was making its appearance. Besides, this business of kings and crowns and pomp disturbed the people, as they recalled the Revolution in their equalitarian hearts. Was not Napoleon, who owed them his throne, seeking to restore a Court just like that of the fallen Sovereigns, with favorites ready, like their predecessors, to batten on the people's toil and sweat?

The people saw clearly, for that was just what Napoleon contemplated. At the birth of his son, he proposed to revive the glories of the old régime. Monsieur de Ségur, the grand master of ceremonies, was requested to look up speedily everything that had to do with the pregnancy of a queen, baptism, and the appointment and functions of a governess.

Losing no time, the grand master of ceremonies delved into the archives, extracted an armful of them, and arrived at Fontainebleau with the dust of them thick upon him. The Emperor had a very definite idea in mind. He proposed to reorganize the Household of the Princess of France. He discussed everything, settled the smallest details in person, and turned trifles into affairs of State.

But the most delicate matter was the choice of a governess. Formerly this post had been solicited by members of the leading families of France. The Comtesse de Marsan,

the Princess de Guéménée, and the Duchesse de Polignac had held it in turn.

Whom should Napoleon select? At this point, a vivid recollection helped the Emperor to make up his mind.

During the previous month of August, one evening at the Trianon, he had invited Madame de Montesquiou, the wife of his grand chamberlain, to dine at his table. She was forty-five, and was an irreproachable wife, a perfect mother of five children, and a woman of the highest birth, on whom back-biters broke their teeth.

There she sat at the Emperor's table, on her host's right. It was a Friday. Strange to relate, she did not touch a single one of the meat courses which followed one another. She ate nothing but bread and butter.

"What an insult to the Emperor!" people whispered. But Napoleon, though he noticed everything, said nothing.

Finally, an attendant placed two fast-day dishes in front of Madame de Montesquiou.

"Here are the dishes you ordered, Madame la Comtesse," he said.

Madame de Montesquiou hesitated for a moment. How would the Emperor take it? Nevertheless, she boldly attacked her fish, while the guests exchanged scandalized glances. Napoleon still did not open his mouth.

Such independence of character, such strength of conviction, were indices which there was no mistaking.

Napoleon hesitated no longer. On November 22nd, 1810, Madame de Montesquiou was appointed governess to the Prince of France.

"Madame," Napoleon said to her, "I entrust you with the fate of France. Make my son a good Frenchman and a good Christian. The two things go together."

It was, in fact, upon the governess that the heavy task

of bringing up the Imperial child would devolve entirely. His mother would have no authority over him. She was to bring him into the world, that was all. Once he left the womb that bore him, he would belong to the State.

Next Napoleon completed the King of Rome's household. He appointed two under-governesses; a squire, Monsieur de Canisy; a physician, Monsieur Bourdois, an old comrade of his in the Army of Italy; and, as in the case of the Empresses's households, "red" serving women, clad in amaranthine merino, and "white" serving women, and two cradle-rockers—in all, together with valets, ushers and kitchen staff, some thirty persons.

And what about foster-mothers? They must not be forgotten. The choice deserved attention.

Madame Maillard, Louis XVI's foster-mother, who was still alive, and Madame Poitrine, foster-mother to the last Dauphin, were consulted. They furnished all the requisite information. It was a question of finding a woman in the best of health who would give the best milk. Napoleon had surmised as much.

Meanwhile applications flowed in. The police made inquiries about the applicants, a midwife examined them, and then the doctors made first a preliminary selection and finally a definite one. Three bold wenches, named Auchard, Corville and Mortier, remained in the running.

They were shut up in a house rented for the purpose in the rue de Rivoli. They were forbidden to leave it before the birth. It was a Draconian rule, but their food was of fine quality and their wages were high. In short, they lived a life of imprisoned ease.

Meanwhile the Court had returned to its winter quarters at the Tuileries. The New Year festivities of 1811 took their course amid a fine parade of etiquette.

But Napoleon had by no means finished his preparations.

Where should the King of Rome reside? Without question, during the summer he would live at Meudon. It was the healthiest place in the neighborhood. But what about the rest of the year?

Napoleon made up his mind to build a palace for his son on the hill of Chaillot: a palace to match the measure of his fame, which would put Versailles, Schönbrunn and Potsdam in the shade. Fontaine furnished plans. The palace would have a colonnade four hundred yards long facing the Seine and the Military Academy. The estimate amounted to a mere sixty millions.

Pending the building of the palace, the boy would live at the Tuileries, in the ground-floor apartments in the center of the palace at present occupied by Duroc, the Grand Marshal. Grand Marshal though he might be, Duroc must turn out, bag and baggage.

Under the direction of the architect, Fontaine, floors and ceilings were repaired and the apartments were redecorated. Upholsterers hung the bedchamber in Florentine green grogram, whose color would spare the prince's eyesight.

Then the cradles arrived. Jacob Demalter provided one made of an elm-root, in the shape of a skiff. Théomire Duterme delivered another in oak, decorated at the sides with bas-reliefs. But what were these compared with the cradle which, on March 3rd, 1811, the City of Paris presented to the Emperor?

It was designed by Prud'hon and executed by Thomire and Odiot. It was in the form of mother-of-pearl balusters, spangled with golden bees and resting on four horns of abundance, beside which watched the Geniuses of Strength and Justice. At the head of it, Fame, hovering over the world, held up a crown of immortality, in the middle of which shone Napoleon's star. At the foot, a young eaglet gazed at the star and spread its wings as though to fly

towards it. The cradle was all silk, nacarat velvet, gold, mother-of-pearl, and silver-gilt, and its artistry made it a joy forever.

Next, the governess concerned herself with the baby-clothes. Madame Minette, who kept shop in the rue de Miromesnil, supplied the linen, and Lesueur, the dresses. Everything that was most delicate in linen cloth and cambric, the finest pieces of lace and embroidered muslin, were sent to the Tuileries.

An outfit for the foster-mother also had to be provided. It was Madame Auchard, a buxom, fresh, healthy gossip, who finally got the job. She was bursting with pride and robustness; and her broad face looked all the more round because, as a measure of hygiene and as a preventive against fleas, her hair had been closely cropped.

Napoleon insisted on settling all these details in person. Nothing could be done without his consent. He went so far as to summon Barbier, his librarian, and request him to appoint a committee and draw up a list of all the books which would be required for the King of Rome's proper education.

Then, pencil in hand, and breaking the point of it every other minute, he regulated the ceremonial for the childbirth.

While all these preparations were coming to a head, Marie Louise kept on quietly rounding out.

"I'm turning into a monstrosity," she said.

Her health was, in fact, excellent; but the least little discomfort became unendurable to her. Sometimes it was her stomach. Sometimes it was her back. Sometimes it was her corns. She thought she was on the point of death, and summoned Corvisart.

"Well, you old charlatan," cried Napoleon, at the sight of him, "have you killed many people today?"

"Not many, Sire," replied the doctor, modestly.

"I'm not so sure you haven't. If not, what are you looking so glum about? Are all your patients on their feet again?"

Corvisart responded only with a smile. Then, with an air of great gravity, he examined his patient. He ordered for her pills of sugared breadcrumbs and drops of plain water. They worked wonders!

Thus restored to health, the Empress resumed the normal course of her life. She got up at ten o'clock, had breakfast and then read or embroidered. In the afternoon, if the weather were fine, she followed coursing in a carriage. If it rained or snowed, she played billiards with Napoleon or went to the Comédie Française, the Opéra, or the Opéra Comique. In the evening, she entertained her friends and attended Court theatrical performances and balls.

On March 4th, she drove to the Parc Monceau. This was her last outing in a carriage. After that, she went out only on foot, to take the air on the terrace of the Tuileries overlooking the Seine.

But she had to make her way through the increasingly thick crowds which gathered to gape at her. A pregnant Empress was a spectacle as rare as that presented by the comet which gleamed in the sky that year. So Napoleon ordered an underground passage to be constructed from the Tuileries to the terrace, and this enabled Marie Louise to escape the curiosity of the populace.

In her apartments, she interested herself in the outfit which was being prepared for her childbirth. It consisted of any number of nightdresses, brassières, sheets, nightcaps and bandages. Brussels and Valenciennes point lace figured largely in it. The bed in which, once it was all over, she was to look her best, was in itself a masterpiece.

It was all French point lace, and it cost one hundred and twenty thousand francs. People were to talk about it with admiration for the next fifty years.

But the most interesting item in her outfit was provided by the clergy. On March 14th, the parish priest and churchwardens of Notre Dame at Chartres presented to the Empress, as was the custom in the days of queens, a nightdress of embroidered satin, cut from the model of the Virgin's blessed nightdress, which had been kept in the cathedral treasury for the past eight hundred years. This precious gift would spare her the pangs of childbirth.

Marie Louise's time was soon at hand. Napoleon had lost something of his assurance. He felt that he was on the point of settling accounts with Fate. It was a settlement on which his whole life, his whole future, would depend. Would he come out on the credit or the debit side?

In any case, he would have one consolation. He was going to have a child of his own, a legitimate child whom he would be free to parade in public, to caress in public.

He had always been fond of children. But this time it was going to be his own—his very own! What would it be?

Day and night, Napoleon brooded over the enigma which his wife carried within her, over the mystery which no science in the world could as yet clear up. Would it be a boy? Or would it be a girl? God alone knew, and there was no altering His decree.

But Napoleon's fighting soul rose up in rebellion against this inevitability. It humiliated him. He exerted all his will-power, at full strength, to impose it upon those forces that were maturing life in an unknown sphere, where human reason, human power, had no place.

CHAPTER VIII

A DRAMATIC CHILDBIRTH

ON March 19th, a theatrical performance was to be given at the Tuileries in honor of the Duke of Würtzburg, Marie Louise's uncle. It was nearly eight o'clock, and the guests were already arriving.

But what was this? The Duchesse de Montebello came out of the Empress's apartments, and she was still in day dress. In day dress after seven o'clock in the evening! What could have happened to excuse such a breach of etiquette?

Rumor ran rife. The lady of honor confirmed it.

"Her Majesty is beginning to feel her first pains."

Promptly the gathering broke up. Everybody attached to the Court went home, got into uniform, and returned to the Tuileries to take up the post assigned to him. There was no hesitation, no indecision. Napoleon had regulated the procedure of the childbirth just as he drew up a plan of battle.

As soon as the Empress felt her first pains in her back, he sent for Dubois, the midwifery surgeon, who had been staying at the palace for several days past. Napoleon also dispatched pages to the princes and princesses, the president of the Senate, and the prefect of the department of the Seine. Then he returned to his wife.

In her bedchamber, Marie Louise groaned heartbreakingly. Dubois, who had hastened to the scene, her lady of

honor, her lady of the bedchamber, Madame de Montesquiou and her nurse busied themselves around her in vain.

"Oh, it hurts," she wailed, "it hurts!"

A frightful pang stabbed her. As she could not remain lying down, Napoleon walked her up and down the room on his arm. He kissed her, caressed her, and lavished encouragements and endearments upon her.

From time to time, when her suffering was less intense, he went out to the Hall of Graces to keep his family informed. With her black eyes shining, and her hands in her lap, Napoleon's mother, "Madame Mère," waited silent and stiff. She had been the first arrival, and she was followed by Eugène and Hortense, Josephine's son and daughter; Prince Borghese, and the Duke of Würtzburg.

Here, too, were the doctors, ready for emergencies, like the Guard: five in all, with Corvisart at their head.

Every member of the Court was present, awaiting the arrival of the Imperial child. The bells of Notre Dame rang out over Paris. Who could hope to sleep on such a night? Drawn from their beds, the people of Paris flocked yawning to the Tuileries palace. With every window lit up, it stood out against the dark, chilly sky like a gigantic chandelier.

Time went on, and the Court, having nothing to do, began to feel that Marie Louise's deliverance lagged. Ten o'clock, eleven o'clock.... Napoleon kept on the move between the Empress's bedchamber and the Hall of Graces.

He questioned Corvisart eagerly, this time with no sarcasm:

"Do you think it would be possible by now to tell the child's sex? Couldn't you give me some idea?..."

The doctor shook his head.

"We can only wait, Sire...."

In the drawing-rooms of the Tuileries a solemn silence had at first prevailed; but dignity was soon dropped. People formed groups, chatted and argued. Would it be a boy or a girl? This question gave spice to every conversation. To make it still more interesting, bets were laid. The betting on a boy was ten to one.

Corvisart was of opinion that the birth would not take place until the next day. Everybody thought that the Empress was overdoing it. To keep all these people patient, Napoleon cast about for something to occupy them. Would not the best thing be to give them food and drink? So, at midnight, by the Emperor's orders, footmen served supper in the drawing-room: wine, punch, chocolate, cold meat. The company fell to, and things went better....

So the night slowly passed.... Two o'clock, three o'clock.... People nearly yawned their heads off. Old chamberlains slept standing on one foot like herons. Fatigue drew dark rims around everybody's eyes. The ladies scarcely dared to look at themselves in the mirror. Their paint had long since melted and their powder vanished. Their crumpled frocks might have come from the rag-picker's. Lines of courtiers drowsed leaning against the gilded walls. Fair heads sank to the shoulders of hussars and horse-grenadiers. It was cold. The candles died one by one. The silence was broken only at intervals by the sound of a snore....

All at once, as though at the touch of a magician's wand, a voice brought the sleepy company to life again. It was that of the colonel-general on duty. He was reading a bulletin drafted by Corvisart and Dubois.

"Her Majesty the Empress began to feel the pains of childbirth yesterday evening about eight o'clock. They lessened during the night, and almost ceased towards dawn. Her Majesty's condition is quite satisfactory."

General consternation greeted this news. How much longer would they have to wait? But the colonel-general at once went on to say that the Emperor gave everybody permission to retire. At last! Nobody waited to be told twice. In a few moments the drawing-rooms were deserted.

It was six o'clock in the morning. Napoleon went upstairs to his apartments.

"Prepare me a very hot bath," he said to Constant, "and then you can get me breakfast."

He undressed, wrapped himself in a white swanskin dressing-gown, donned a nightcap, thrust his feet into red slippers, and made his way to the bathroom. He got into the bath, lay down and lolled back. Then he frowned. The bath was not hot enough. He turned on the faucet. Boiling water gushed out, and steam filled the room.

It was through this vapor, as dense as a mist, that the valet Constant suddenly made his appearance, pale and stammering.

"Sire! Sire!"

"What's the matter?" cried Napoleon. "Speak, man!"

"It's the doctor—Doctor Dubois. He's here. He wants to speak to you, at once. . . ."

"All right, send him in. . . ."

The surgeon rushed distractedly towards the Emperor, with his face distorted, and the two tufts of frizzled hair on either side of his bald skull bristling with panic.

"Oh, Sire, Sire! . . ."

Napoleon stared at him. Obviously the fellow brought bad news. But bad news had no effect on the Emperor at the time when he heard it. He did not react to it until an hour afterwards. He sat up in his bath, and cried:

"Well, is she dead? If she's dead, she'll have to be buried."

Dubois jumped as though he had the hiccups.

"Oh, Sire! . . . . No, Sire; but the water in the womb has dispersed. . . . It doesn't happen in one case in a thousand. And it has to happen just here and now . . ."

Napoleon cut short the fellow's lamentations sharply.

"Come, come, let's have the facts!"

"Sire, my position is a delicate one . . . ."

Napoleon wriggled in his bath like a triton in a pond.

"Keep your head, for God's sake! Forget she's the Empress. Treat her just as you would treat a shopkeeper's wife in the rue Saint-Denis."

"The fact is," stammered Dubois, "that the child is coming out awkwardly . . . feet first. . . ."

"Well, what are you going to do?"

The surgeon lowered his voice.

"I shall have to use forceps."

Napoleon shuddered at the word.

"Will there be any danger?"

"No, not exactly. . . . But I may have to choose . . . between the mother and the child. . . ."

The Emperor reflected for a moment or two. Then, raising his head, he looked Dubois straight in the face.

"Save the mother. It's her right . . ."

He stopped for a moment, and went on:

"If she lives, I can have another child. . . . Now go back to the Empress. I'll follow you."

Napoleon jumped out of the bath, and, dripping as he was, pulled on his clothes. A few moments later, he entered Marie Louise's bedchamber, just as they were moving her from one bed to the other in order to make it easier to apply the forceps. She was struggling and sobbing.

"No, no!" she cried. "I won't have it! . . . You're going to kill me. I don't want to die."

She caught sight of Napoleon, and held out her arms to him.

"Am I to be sacrificed because I'm an Empress?"

Napoleon went over to her, took her in his arms, and tried in vain to reassure her. Then Madame de Montesquiou reasoned with her, calmly.

"But it isn't anything, Madame. Look at me. I had to have the forceps twice. It didn't do me any harm."

Standing motionless, Madame Mère stared at her daughter-in-law, tight-lipped. Good Heavens, what a fuss, just over a childbirth! When Marie Louise had brought eight children into the world, like herself, she would have a right to talk. . . .

Then Napoleon spied Dubois standing at the foot of the bed, as though he were dreaming.

"Well, what are you waiting for?"

"For Corvisart, Sire. His presence is essential."

Napoleon suspected the cause of the surgeon's embarrassment.

"If you mean you want a witness, what's wrong with me?"

He gave Dubois a push.

"Come on, can't you imagine you're bringing a cobbler's son into the world?"

Just as Dubois was taking off his coat, Corvisart came in, followed by Yvan and Bourdois. The three of them held the Empress by her arms and legs, while Dubois made ready to operate.

Marie Louise started screaming. At first shrill and spaced, her cries soon became hoarser and more frequent, until they merged into an endless, wild, inhuman clamor.

Napoleon could not stand it. Stopping his ears with his hands, he fled and took refuge in a small room. Marie Louise's cries, though deadened, still reached him through

the walls. His temples were moist, and he felt faint. He put his forehead against the coolness of a window-pane, and waited.

Minutes went by. They seemed centuries. Would this torture never end?

It lasted twenty-three minutes. At last! Here was Yvan the surgeon.

"It's over, Sire. You may come."

Napoleon hurried back into the bedchamber. A little heap of inert, reddish flesh lay on the floor. Napoleon stepped over it. He had eyes only for his wife. He covered her with kisses and caresses.

"Louise, my dear Louise! . . . It's all over now. You won't suffer any more."

Inert, breathless, soaked with sweat, half-unconscious, Marie Louise could not speak; but she smiled faintly.

Meanwhile Corvisart and Madame de Montesquiou had picked up the child. They bathed him in warm water, massaged him, and inserted a few drops of brandy into his mouth. At the end of seven minutes, the child uttered a cry.

At the sound of it, the Emperor swung round.

"My son!"

"He's alive!" said Corvisart.

Madame de Montesquiou presented the new-born babe to Napoleon, wrapped in warm napkins. Napoleon hesitated to take him. His hands trembled. At length, he clasped the child to his breast. But his legs gave way under him. He closed his eyes and clung to Madame Laetitia, who had hurried to his side.

"Kiss him, Mother," he said.

Meanwhile Corvisart supplied appropriate information:

"It's a male child. . . . He is well made, and weighs about nine pounds. . . . He measures twenty inches. . . ."

In his turn, Napoleon kissed the child. Then he carried him to Marie Louise. The Duchesse de Montebello was bathing her face and arranging her hair.

"Here's your son," he said. "Our son.... Thank you, Louise...."

No sooner had the Empress given a kiss to the King of Rome than Napoleon took the child from her and made his way to the Hall of Graces. He stood in the doorway, and, holding the child in the air, showed him to his family. Then he gave the order which was to carry the news to the four corners of the world.

"My pages! And the hundred and one guns!"

Waving aside his family's congratulations, he went upstairs to his apartments to dress. It was nearly half past nine.

"Well, Constant," he said to his valet, "we've got a fine son. But he wasn't in any hurry. My poor wife had a bad time of it. At that price, I don't want any more children...."

He shook his head, and wound up:

"I'd have been more at ease on a battlefield."

While he donned his uniform, he listened.... The batteries of the Imperial Guard started firing salvoes. Then, relaying the bells of Notre Dame, bells rang out from every church-tower. The brazen voices of guns and bells merged together and broke upon the sky of Paris to announce the birth of the Imperial child....

Napoleon went to a window and looked out. The great city, suddenly aroused, buzzed like a hive....

Napoleon could imagine what was happening. He could see housewives in their shawls coming out on their doorsteps, carpenters deserting their benches, shoe-makers laying aside their lasts. Girls sitting at their toilettes opened windows and listened. Old men sat in their chairs, with

their eyes suddenly lighting up again. Everywhere people were hastily dressing, coming out into the streets, hastening towards the Tuileries. At every corner, in every square, people stood gazing up into the sky, as though to read the signs which Fate was about to write there....

The Emperor studied the crowd massed before him in the Tuileries gardens. They were waiting, silent, still. They knew their Sovereign's ardent desire, and they listened with a clutch at their hearts.... The guns kept on thundering.... Fifteen, eighteen, twenty salvoes.... If they stopped at twenty-one, it was a girl.... The twenty-second would signify that a male child had come into the world....

There was a deep silence.... Another salvo! A great sigh of relief went up from the crowd. Their restraint broke down. An immense shout arose:

"Long live the Emperor! Long live the King of Rome!"

People started dancing, clapping their hands, kissing one another, throwing their hats in the air. Their delight, like a gathering wave, spread to the furthest corners of the gardens, swept the neighboring streets, filled the squares, and rose to the heart of Paris like racing blood.

Napoleon shared in this explosion of joy. It was an extension of his own.... He, the people, his son.... Did they not make up an all-powerful trinity, eternal in form?

He had nothing more to desire. He had everything.... God.... Providence had refused him nothing.

His emotion stripped him of his strength. He felt giddy, as though he were on the brink of a precipice....

"The future is mine," he murmured.

Napoleon held on to a curtain with one hand, laid his forehead against the coolness of a window-pane, and let the tears stream down his cheeks.

CHAPTER IX

EARLY MONTHS

For a few days, Napoleon was no longer his own master. His new-found fatherhood imposed certain official duties upon him, and these he had no mind to shirk. But, as soon as he was at liberty, he hastened to his son's cradle.

He stood there for minutes at a time in ecstasy. He never tired of gazing at his son's big head, his nose that turned up so comically at the tip, his high forehead, his fine golden hair, just beginning to curl.

The child's little hands, above all, delighted him. They went through the motions of clutching something. What? The world? The world was his son's. Those little rosy hands, with their spatulate fingers, had uprooted the race of the Bourbons from France forever, like rank grass.

But all the fuss about his birth did not prevent the King of Rome from sleeping and thriving. For the time being, his Majesty sucked with avidity, with his rosy mouth in the form of a circumflex accent, his two tiny palms quite flat and his little fingers spread out on Madame Auchard's broad breast.

Napoleon, however, imagined him already at table with him, drinking soup and eating Marengo chicken. One evening, at the beginning of April, he gave the child a prune to suck, just to see. . . . The child coughed and nearly choked. Madame de Montesquiou hurried up, saved her

nursling from strangling, and gave the Emperor such a look that he blushed.

"I didn't know," he stammered. "I shouldn't have done it. I swear to you, Madame, it shall never happen again."

Another time, the Emperor questioned Madame de Montesquiou about his son's doings and sayings.

"Sire," she told him, "people are already presenting petitions to His Majesty."

"Oh, are they?" said the Emperor. "Clever people.... And what does His Majesty say to them?"

"Nothing, Sire," replied the governess, keeping a straight face.

"Well, silence gives consent...."

On April 19th, Marie Louise's churching took place with little ceremony, as Napoleon had a horror of ecclesiastical pomp, and the next day the whole Court set off for Saint Cloud.

The King of Rome accompanied his parents. With his household, he was lodged on the ground floor, to the left of the château, in apartments which opened into the gardens. There he would have good air and be quiet, away from the commotion which his father created around him.

Nevertheless, at the end of April there was a flurry. Cases of smallpox were reported in Paris. At once the doctors took alarm. The little King must be vaccinated.

The operation was carried out on May 11th by Husson, doctor at the Hotel-Dieu Hospital. It was a complete success. On May 31st, the scabs fell off, and they were attached as exhibits to Husson's report on the case. It specified, among other things, that His Majesty had been purged with syrup of peach-blossom and syrup of chicory, and that the effect was copious. Husson got six

thousand francs for six cuts with a scalpel, not to speak of the advantage to his reputation.

But by now Napoleon was getting restless. The fact that he had a son was no reason why he should remain tied to him like a dog to a stake. The King of Rome had his governess, who was responsible for him. He had his household and his doctors to look after him. He had no need of the continual presence of his parents beside him.

The Emperor was ready to be separated from his son, but not from his wife. Marie Louise must accompany him.

On May 14th, the Emperor and the Empress took up their quarters at Rambouillet. Thence, a week later, they set off for Cherbourg, with fifty carriages and a brilliant military escort. At every halt, the Imperial couple scattered gold and presents.

Poor Marie Louise found her martyrdom renewed day by day: fêtes, banquets, audiences, galas, balls; little leisure and less sleep. At Dreux, at Laigle, at Valogne, everywhere she went, she presented a pout and an air of dejection to the crowds that gathered to welcome her.

"A regular death's head at a feast," said the Normans, disgusted at their failure to win a smile from her frowning face.

Napoleon was in a hurry to reach Cherbourg. Cherbourg! It was thence that he would take off for England. ... He must see how the preparations were going. But his visits to arsenals and ships did not make him neglect his wife.

He loved having a joke with her. One day, he took her in his arms.

"Shall I throw you into the sea?" he said.

"If you like," replied Marie Louise, like a good girl.

Another day, when she was visiting a flagship, Napoleon decided to spring a surprise on her. He ordered all the bat-

teries to be fired at once. Sixty cannon thundered all together. Marie Louise shrieked and nearly died of fright.

The days passed by, and it was time to return to Paris for the King of Rome's baptism. Before his departure, Napoleon had settled every detail of it. He wanted to have a colorful ceremony which would reflect his own power, strike the popular imagination, and give the Bourbons' remaining partisans something to think about.

Off again! Napoleon returned at full speed, dragging his poor wife through a whirlwind of festivities. Scarcely over her childbirth, pale and thin, she was exhausted in her efforts to keep up with him.

On June 8th, the King of Rome was brought back from Saint Cloud to the Tuileries. The next day, at nine o'clock in the morning, the sound of guns—always guns!—gave the signal for the festivities, and the cathedral bells echoed it.

At the Imperial palace, solemn audiences succeeded one another. At noon, the troops on duty set off for their posts. From the Tuileries to Notre Dame, by way of the boulevards and the place du Châtelet, grenadiers, fusiliers and light infantry lined the route. They waited more than five hours for the passing of the procession.

At length it appeared. At its head came light cavalry, gendarmes, light infantry and Mamelukes. Then followed twenty-four carriages containing prefects of the palace, chamberlains, ladies of the palace and great officers of State. These preceded the four carriages containing the princes and princesses.

Next, flanked by a guard of honor, came the Empress's carriage, drawn by its eight horses. In it, seated at the back, was Madame de Montesquiou, holding the little King

on her lap. Opposite her sat the two under-governesses and Madame Auchard, the King's foster-mother.

Then it was the turn of the coronation coach. In it sat the Emperor, wearing a plumed hat and a suit and cloak of crimson velvet, spangled with diamonds. Beside him sat the Empress, wearing a dress of white satin adorned with a sheath of silver gauze. With a diadem on her brow, a necklace round her neck, and bracelets at her wrists, she sparkled like her husband.

Slowly the procession made its way through crowds which were enormous, but strangely silent. The curiosity which had drawn them there seemed hostile.

This display of pomp, which recalled only too much the ostentation of the old régime—was it not a challenge thrown down to the people, who still remembered that they had made the Revolution? Their master owed them everything. With bitterness in their hearts, they saw thronging around him once more, aristocrats of the former Court, exiles restored to favor: a swarm of nobles again as insolent as in the old days, thrusting workmen out of their way and lashing out with their whips at pedestrians who did not stand aside quickly enough for them.

This parade of luxury, too, taunted them with their own property. It made them anxious about their future, in which they could see nothing but want, taxes and battle-fields on which they would leave their bones.

It was seven o'clock when the King of Rome entered Notre Dame in his governess's arms. She carried him in a mantle of silver brocade over seven ells long, trimmed with ermine. He wore his finest dress of Brussels point lace and a bonnet which was a masterpiece. The broad ribbon of the Legion of Honor crossed his chest, and His Majesty made a great meal of it, slobbering on it copiously.

Immediately behind him came his foster-mother, parad-

ing herself in all the glory of a white silk dress. Hippolyte, the famous barber, had done her hair for the occasion, providing her with hundreds of little curls which strayed out of her fine cap of needle-point lace and clung funnily around her broad face.

Then the Imperial family entered the cathedral, the two god-fathers, the two god-mothers, the Emperor and the Empress, each with a canopy held over them, and behind them the whole Court.

Once the sacrament was administered, Napoleon took his son in his arms, kissed him, and held him up in the air to show him to the congregation. A great shout filled the vast cathedral:

"Long live the King of Rome!"

After the *Vivat,* the grand chaplain intoned the *Te Deum,* and the ceremony was over. The little King at once returned to Saint Cloud with his governess. But for the Emperor and the Empress the day was not yet ended. There was a banquet at the City Hall, followed by a concert and a reception. Meanwhile the populace, excluded from these festivities, danced, sang and feasted on their own account.

On June 16th, Napoleon returned the compliment of the city of Paris and gave a banquet at the Tuileries: in all, nine covers for the Emperor and his family. It was a "Grand Cover," the same as in the time of the Kings. The guests watched their Sovereigns eating, and felt very much honored.

On that day, again, there was nothing for the populace. But they were compensated on June 23rd at Saint Cloud, where festivities were organized for them on a scale unknown in the memory of man. Three hundred thousand Parisians flocked to these festivities.

The whole day was spent in feasting and entertainments.

But the company had to wait till nightfall for the finest thing of all. The park and the waterfalls were illuminated, and a fireworks display was given by the Guards, who embarked in boats and fought a mock naval battle on the Seine, while overhead Madame Blanchard, in a balloon, set aerial fireworks crackling across the sky.

When these festivities were over, Marie Louise felt that she might at last lead the quiet, regular life which suited her.

She indulged herself, she petted herself, she devoted plenty of time to her person. She took lessons in pastel from Prud'hon and in watercolor from Isabey. She played slow waltzes with Paër, her music-master; embroidered with Madame Rousseau; posed for Gérard, who was painting her portrait. She took tea at a fixed time, drank Viennese chocolate, stuffed herself with candies.

In fact, Napoleon now allowed her some respite. He had resumed something of his independence. He gave up sleeping with Marie Louise, on the pretext of avoiding risks to her health. Dubois the surgeon had told him that it would be dangerous for her to have another child.

The truth was that Napoleon was beginning to find himself bored in Marie Louise's company. What could they talk about for any length of time? They had no memories in common. Was Marie Louise to recall her childhood, lived under the threat of the Corsican ogre? Or was Napoleon to talk about his poverty-stricken youth, his life as a Jacobin officer, his acceptance of the material to make his general's uniform from Madame Tallien, a lady of easy virtue?

On the other hand, the affairs of the Empire caused him much anxiety. He was in open conflict with his brothers, who traduced him and betrayed him. The war in Spain

was exhausing the Treasury and decimating his armies. Russia was becoming threatening, and Prussia was raising her head once more. England's money was arming Europe against him. War was close at hand again. Napoleon's thoughts were with the hundreds of thousands of men who, from the four corners of his Empire, were on their way to the eastern frontier.

His sole moments of relaxation were those when his son was brought to him.

At Saint Cloud, he had reverted to his old habit of eating by himself. One day, his table was set under the chestnut-trees in front of the Orangery. He ate in ten minutes, just as he used to, throwing around him bones and orders which Duroc, Maret, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Barbier the librarian caught as they flew.

Napoleon frowned. Russia would take a lot of beating. She was a vast country. But he would strike at her heart, and make the Muscovite bearskin his carpet.

All at once, his face lit up. In the distance, at the other end of a path, he could see Madame de Montesquiou coming towards him, carrying the little King. Behind her waddled the foster-mother, clad in a dress and cloak of water-green levantine, and looking like a well-fed duck.

The Emperor stood up and went forward with outstretched arms.

"Come to me, my little pup! . . ."

He took his son skillfully from his governess's arms, kissed him, and raised him in the air, amid a flutter of lace. He gloated over him.

What a fine little fellow he was, with his shapely mouth, his curly golden hair, his bright blue eyes, that seemed to give back more light than they received from the summer sky!

Napoleon probed into him, seeking himself within him.

He gazed into the boy's enigmatic eyes, as though to catch a reflection of his own life. He listened with intoxication to the little heart beating against his breast, a faint echo of his own heart.

Then he made a discovery which delighted him.

"Look," he said to the governess, "he's got my chest—the deep chest of the Bonapartes!"

The child wriggled in his arms and whimpered angrily.

"He's like me all over," Napoleon went on, "he's no patience."

He sat down, put the child on his knee, and stared at him, thoughtfully. So small, so weak—and already destined to rule the world! Instead of a toy, his father had thrust an empire into his dimpled arms. Napoleon longed to see him grown-up, strong, fit to help him, to take his place in case of need. Life's slowness served only to quicken his imagination.

But until then it was play-time. Napoleon had invented some games which scarcely anyone but himself found funny.

He dipped his finger in the sauce on his plate, and daubed it on the King of Rome's face. His Majesty licked it cautiously. Then Napoleon gave him a few drops of his Chambertin to drink. The child did not make a sound, but tears came to his eyes.

"Sire," the governess intervened, in a reproachful tone, "you'll upset him."

"You're quite right," agreed Napoleon; and he passed on to another amusement.

He pulled the child's ears, rubbed his head with his palm, gave him a shake and called him "Sir." The child pouted, and waved his little rose satin-shod feet angrily in the air.

"Sire," Madame de Montesquiou intervened again, "you're hurting him."

Gerard

MARIE LOUISE AND THE KING OF ROME

"So I am!" assented Napoleon.

But that did not stop him from carrying on a long conversation with his son.

"We'll soon have fine Sèvres porcelain plates to teach you to read, and some still finer to teach you history: Papa's history, to begin with. They're all ordered already. . . ."

The little King, with his tip-tilted nose pointing to the sky, never took his eyes from his father and followed every motion he made.

"He can observe movements already," remarked Napoleon. "We'll make a great general out of him."

On another occasion, the Empress joined the Emperor when he was with his son in the gardens. Napoleon held the child out to her.

"Come, Louise, take your son!"

The Empress took the child; but she did not know how to hold him.

"How awkward you are!" cried Napoleon.

"I'm afraid of suffocating him if I hold him too tight," Marie Louise confessed.

"Then give him back to me!"

Napoleon took the child back. He really had the arms of a foster-mother, this Emperor: arms that were both sure and gentle. The little King found himself tossed up first to the right, and then to the left, and smiled his wonderment.

Marie Louise gazed at him rather shyly. This child was flesh of her flesh; but the links that bound her to him were growing weaker day by day.

Could any woman really be a mother who had not herself cared for her child, watched over him, petted him, trembled at his smallest sign of fever, given him all the time her own patience, her own strength, her own ideas, the best of her life?

Even if the Empress wanted to do all this, she could not do it. Court etiquette forbade her all those actions by which a mother proclaims her watchful love for her son. The little King now belonged to the State. Between him and Marie Louise stood Madame de Montesquiou. It was she who took all decisions, gave all orders. Napoleon's will had transferred to her all the rights of the real mother. The governess bristled at the smallest infringement of etiquette, and the Empress had to beat a retreat.

How could Marie Louise help being jealous? Her lady of honor, Madame de Montebello, who had a great influence over her, did her best to set her against the governess. It was part of the clash between the brand-new nobility, born on the battlefields, and the old aristocracy whose roots plunged deep into the history of France.

For that matter, Napoleon had organized the King of Rome's household in such a way that the child had no need of his mother. Marie Louise must always be in a position to accompany her husband, anywhere, at any time. Napoleon reminded her of the fact.

Once more the Emperor carried the Empress away with him in a whirlwind of traveling. This time it was a round of the châteaux in the neighborhood of Paris. In the month of July the Court was at Trianon. At the beginning of August it was at Rambouillet. On August 15th it was back in Paris for Napoleon's birthday. In the evening, arm in arm, like lower-class lovers, the Emperor and the Empress went for a stroll through the fair on the boulevards.

On August 24th they returned to Trianon. Six days later, this time accompanied by the little King, they settled down at Compiègne for three weeks.

On September 22nd, the child went back to Saint Cloud. Meanwhile, on the 19th, his parents had set off for Holland. Their journey lasted nearly two months.

During all this time, the Emperor and the Empress were always on the road, sometimes passing through cities without stopping. They visited Antwerp, Amsterdam, Leyden, The Hague, Rotterdam. On October 30th they were at Nimingen. From there they reached Düsseldorf in three days. On November 11th they arrived at Saint-Cloud.

Marie Louise was at the end of her tether. She had grown thin, and her hair was falling out.

"Good Heavens," she cried, as she kissed her son, "he doesn't recognize me!"

"Sire," said Madame de Montesquiou, handing the child to his father, "His Majesty can say 'Papa,' and he has cut four teeth. . . ."

Four teeth! He had cut the first on October 26th. The event was followed by the doctors and commented upon in the newspapers.

The Emperor kissed his son. He knew what he must do next. The first tooth of a King was worth a thousand times its weight in diamonds. Manna, in the shape of costly presents, rained down again upon every member of the household. In honor of that first tooth, Napoleon granted everything anybody requested: pensions, pardons, recall of exiles.

The family spent the rest of November at Saint Cloud. On December 1st, the King of Rome returned to Paris to take up his winter quarters in the Tuileries. There he stayed; for, on account of the hard winter, Napoleon decided that there should be no move to Fontainebleau this year.

By now the boy was eight months old. He was starting to toddle. His governess exerted herself to get him to say "Papa" and "Mamma" properly by the New Year.

Meanwhile, he played. He had no lack of toys. He had ninepins, a box-wood doll's house, a miniature piano, and a

sheep on wheels which, with all its bells, made a noise like a stage-coach.

But his finest toy was a present from his aunt, the Queen of Naples, who gave it to him for Christmas. It was an open carriage, complete with carvings and engravings: a real carriage, as the people of Paris soon had a chance to see.

Thanks to it, by the beginning of January sightseers were flocking to the river terrace at the Tuileries. When the sun shone, they were presented with a free show, and a touching one.

Here was to be seen a very unusual equipage: a little open carriage drawn by two sheep, led by a page. The sheep were two merino sheep, trained by Franconi, the circus manager. They were as white as Paschal lambs, and their horns were gilded.

In the carriage sat a pretty, pink and white child, with golden hair that looked at though it were painted. He was clad in a dress of embroidered muslin and a coat of blue levantine trimmed with swansdown. He held the reins in his little mittened hands, and his little feet, shod in blue morocco, kicked about gleefully.

"What a heavenly child! Isn't he a darling!" exclaimed mothers, with tears in their eyes.

"Long live the King of Rome!" cried their husbands, throwing their caps up in the air.

Attracted by the noise, Napoleon stood at the window of his study, summing up the significance of the scene.

"Dear little fellow!" he said to himself. "He does more than Wagram or Austerlitz to make me popular."

CHAPTER X

EMPEROR AT PLAY

NAPOLEON laid his hand on the shoulder of his confidant, the Grand Marshal, and looked him straight in the face.

"Yes, Duroc, war is inevitable."

The Grand Marshal said nothing. He watched the Emperor as he walked up and down the room with his hands behind his back. Now and again, in accordance with a trick of his, Napoleon tugged at the scarlet facing of his foot-grenadier's uniform.

He came to a standstill, took a little, oval, tortoise-shell snuff-box out of his pocket, and opened it with one hand.

"A pinch, Duroc?"

The Grand Marshal did not like the snuff, which was not finely enough grated for him; but he took a pinch of it out of politeness, and pretended to sniff it up his nostrils. Napoleon, for his part, helped himself to a big pinch, smeared it all over his nose and scattered grains all around him, sneezed, and went on with his walk.

"Yes, my friend, war is inevitable. I might even say that it is essential. . . ."

"Nevertheless, Sire," Duroc objected, boldly, "everybody wants peace."

Napoleon studied his old comrade's honest face for a moment or two. He liked Duroc's frizzled hair, growing low down on his forehead; his big nose, proper to a good

fellow; his eyes which were the windows of a soul devoted to his master.

"Peace? . . . Nobody wants peace more than I do. But it takes two, or even more, to make peace. . . . I know that it's a hard winter, and there is fear of famine. . . ."

"The people are murmuring," ventured the Grand Marshal.

A tawny flash sprang suddenly from Napoleon's eyes.

"Are you talking about the recent insurrection? A handful of rebels bribed by the Bourbons! And where did it take place? At Caen, a hot-bed of insurgents! But I taught them a lesson. Eight executions, and I didn't even spare women. I had to make an example, Grand Marshal, make an example. . . ."

Duroc prudently beat a retreat. He looked around him.

They were in the map-room next door to the Emperor's study. On the table was spread out an immense map of Russia. It was spangled with red-headed and black-headed pins, representing respectively the French forces and the enemy's forces. A compass lay upon it, and all around it stood a score of candlesticks, which had served to light it up during the night.

"Sire," said Duroc, reproachfully, "you've been spending part of the night here again. You'll tire yourself out. . . ."

"Yes, we stayed up very late, d'Albe and I. . . . But you know me: three hours of sleep is all I need. . . . We did a good night's work. The two of us got up on the table and lay down on the map to see it better. D'Albe moved the Russian pins and I moved the French pins. At one moment, in the heat of action, we banged our heads together. . . ."

Duroc laughed.

"Clumsy fellow, poor d'Albe! I'll bet he's got a fine lump on his. . . ."

Napoleon deigned to smile.

"I expect so. His head isn't as hard as mine. . . ."

Then, suddenly in the grip of his great dream again, he banged his fist on the map.

"That's where I'm going. That's where I'm going, I say! I'll sign peace at Moscow itself. At Moscow itself! My Grand Army will go straight to the bear's heart like a sword."

Napoleon's lip curled.

"He's a knave, that fellow Alexander. He knows I'm having a hard time of it in Spain, and he's taking advantage of it. Let me tell you, Duroc, that ever since Erfurt the Russian alliance has been falling to pieces, and my marriage finished it off. To be sure, he dallied with me for a time. Why didn't he go and plague the English in India? And what about the Turkish Empire? I'd have given him most of it. He had only to go and take it—leaving Constantinople to me, of course. But he turned up his nose at that. And now he's not friends with France any more. He won't trade with us. Tomorrow he'll be asking me to evacuate Prussia. Such insolence demands punishment, and I've assembled half a million men to inflict it on him. You must see that there's no way out but war, Duroc."

"But, Sire," objected the Grand Marshal, "you can count on Austria's support. . . ."

Napoleon's mouth drooped bitterly.

"Austria? She won't give me any help worth mentioning. Benevolent neutrality, or a few thousand men at the best. My father-in-law is in Metternich's pocket. I've nothing to expect from those people. . . . Of course, not a word about all this to the Empress. I'm not satisfied with her state of health, and she mustn't be worried."

"You can count on my discretion, Sire."

"I'm sure I can, Duroc. Meanwhile, we must dismiss de-

pression. I've taken steps to do so. On February 6th we shall have a great dress ball, and, on the night of Shrove-Tuesday, a masked ball, whose splendor will long be remembered."

At this moment, the door opened and Ménéval came in.

"What is it?" demanded Napoleon.

"Sire," replied his secretary, "Her Majesty the Empress and His Majesty the King of Rome are awaiting you."

His son! Everything else ceased to count for Napoleon. His face lit up.

"I'll come at once," he said.

Deserting Duroc, he hurried into his study. Hitherto nobody but his secretary had been allowed inside it. Marie Louise was sitting on a sofa, with the child in her lap. Even this time, she owed her privileged admission to the fact that she herself had brought the boy.

Napoleon kissed his wife and his son. Then he said to the Empress:

"Leave us now, my dear Louise. I'll send the boy back to you shortly."

Marie Louise left the room. Napoleon had his boy all to himself. He held him in his arms.

"To work!" he said to Ménéval, who was sitting as silent as a piece of furniture at a little table in a window-recess. The secretary stood up and brought his master some documents to sign. Napoleon sat down in the hollow of his big mahogany desk, supported by gilded bronze griffons, whose shape, with its two rounded ends, suggested that of a violin. While he signed the documents, he held his son clasped to him with his free arm.

The little King, astride his father's leg, sat quiet; but his hands were busy reaching for papers. He managed to get hold of one. The Emperor gently opened his little fingers,

took the document from him, and smoothed it out. Then he stood up.

"Now I'll dictate to you," he snapped to Méneval.

For the next hour, shifting his son from one arm to the other, Napoleon strode up and down the room, dictating orders which on the morrow would turn the world upside down. The boy, holding on to one of his father's shoulder-straps or his cross of the Legion of Honor, kept quiet, drowned in the flood of words which passed over his head.

Once an imprecation from Napoleon sounded like the snap of a man-eater's jaws. Then the child jumped.

"Poor little man!" exclaimed Napoleon, comforting him with a kiss.

All at once, the Emperor came to a standstill. Before he dictated any more orders, he must study a plan of battle more closely. He put his son down on the floor, and opened a big mahogany box. Out of it he took pieces of wood of unequal size and different colors, representing respectively regiments, divisions, and army corps. He arranged them on the carpet in accordance with the inspiration of his military genius.

Squatting on the floor, the little King took a deep interest in this spectacle. What lovely toys! Innocent little soul, he had no idea that the game in which they figured was a game of death. He came nearer, and his little fingers reached out friskily. Disaster overtook the French army.

Napoleon started rearranging his pieces. The boy thought this was a fine game. He advanced into the middle of the battlefield, and this time nothing was left of the Russian army. Napoleon did not lose his temper. He began his maneuvering over again. More than once his patience was put to the test; but at last he could cry:

"Victory!"

It was the signal for playtime. Napoleon went down on

all fours, the little King climbed on his back, and in this attitude Napoleon crawled all around the room. Then he stood up, and taking the boy in his arms again, showed him funny things in his study: a sliding shelf in his desk; an equestrian statue of Frederick II; a fine shade over a two-branched candle-stick.

But all this was nothing by comparison with the face-making show. Standing at a mirror, Napoleon screwed up his eyes, worked his nose up and down and sideways, pulled his mouth crooked, and stuck out his tongue. The boy laughed so much that Napoleon could see the back of his rosy throat reflected in the mirror.

Down on the floor again, the King, under his father's indulgent eyes, was lord of all he surveyed. He found Napoleon's little black beaver hat lying on a chair. He picked it up and put it on his head, where it promptly sank down to his chin. This started him crying, and Napoleon had to come to his rescue.

A few moments later, he caught sight of Napoleon's sword, lying on the couch where his father had thrown it when he came in. How brightly it gleamed! How lovely it was! The boy's little hand reached out for it.

"So soon?" cried the Emperor. "Patience, sir, patience! You're a little too young yet."

Despite himself, he shuddered at the sight of his son touching that weapon, whose mission was to kill. He felt that his son brought him closer to all humanity. This flesh of his flesh, whom he adored, reminded him that there were other fathers, other sons. Hitherto he had held them too cheaply.

A few days earlier, the little King, who was only just beginning to toddle, had suddenly fallen, in Napoleon's presence, in the Empress's drawing-room. There were cries of horror from the spectators, echoed by the crying and

sobbing of the boy, who had bumped his forehead against a piece of furniture. Madame de Montesquiou hurried to pick him up, and the ladies of the palace gathered round him. They comforted him, dried his eyes, blew his nose.

Meanwhile Napoleon did not stir. He stood silently for some little time, with his head down. Then, coming out of his brown study, he said aloud:

"I've seen one and the same cannon-ball knock down a score in a row. . . ."

CHAPTER XI

THE PLUME

It was not only the Emperor who was proud of the King of Rome. The people of Paris seemed to transfer to the son the affection which they had devoted to the father before they developed their present coolness towards him.

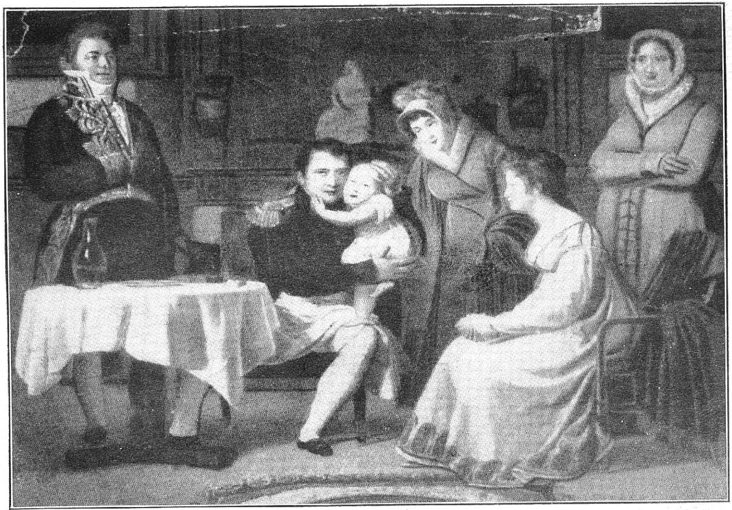
When the little King, with his escort of light cavalry, drove in his carriage to the Bois de Boulogne or the Parc Monceau, cheers greeted him at every street-corner. The populace are always responsive to good looks in their masters. They constitute an added element of attraction. The good looks, the winning ways, of the King of Rome made the people of Paris enthusiastically fond of him. Everything he did assumed an air of legend.

For example, Sergeant Coignet, thanks to his plume, became overnight the most famous and the most envied man in the whole Empire.

One morning, Coignet was mounting guard on the terrace of the château of Saint Cloud. All at once, he saw a group in the distance coming towards him. It was the King of Rome! Thrilled, the sergeant stood at attention.

Madame de Montesquiou was carrying the boy, whose big, rose-colored cloak hung down almost to the ground. Beside her walked his foster-mother. Grand Marshal Duroc escorted the two women.

Suddenly, as they passed the sergeant, standing stiff as



Menjaua

THE IMPERIAL FAMILY, 1811-1812

Standing between Napoleon and Marie Louise is Madame de Montesquiou, the faithful governess of Napoleon's son

a post, but with his mustache quivering with emotion, the little King gave vent to a cry like that of a bird. His little hand reached out towards the red plume on the sergeant's shako which the wind had set ruffling.

"What does he want?" asked his governess.

"Why, the plume, of course!" replied Duroc. He signed to the sergeant.

"Come here, Sergeant. Let him have his way. . . ."

Coignet came forward and went down on one knee. Promptly His Majesty fell upon the plume with both hands, tearing it to pieces and gurgling with delight.

Madame de Montesquiou and his foster-mother nearly split their sides laughing.

"Madame," said Duroc to the governess, "give the prince to the sergeant and let him carry him."

Coignet nearly fainted. He stretched out his arms, took hold of the boy, and walked a pace or two with him.

"Well," asked the Grand Marshal, "is he heavy?"

"He is, Sir."

"Well, you're strong enough. Take him for a walk."

The sergeant walked up and down the terrace. He clutched his Emperor's son frantically to his breast, in dread all the time of stumbling over the flaps of his great coat and falling down. Meanwhile, drunk with delight, His Majesty pawed at what was left of the plume and flung the bits in the air, till he had his victim like a plucked chicken.

Finally Duroc intervened.

"That will do, Sergeant. Give the prince back to the lady. Come to me in an hour, and I'll give you a requisition for two brand-new plumes. You can keep one of them for Sundays. Dismiss, my man!"

So the sergeant dismissed. When he told his superior officers what had happened to him, when he told them

how he had carried the King of Rome in his arms for a quarter of an hour, he saw envy spring to life in the eyes of all around him.

"You're lucky," they said to him. "That's the kind of thing one never forgets."

Of all the people in the Empire, Josephine was perhaps the one who most ardently desired to see the King of Rome.

She had obtained Napoleon's permission to leave the Château of Navarre, in the Eure department, and she was back at Malmaison. Now that she was so near Paris, she kept asking Napoleon to let the little King be brought to her. Napoleon hesitated. He was afraid of making Marie Louise jealous. But at length he agreed, on condition that the meeting take place with the greatest secrecy.

It did so at the Dutch summer-house at Bagatelle. Madame de Montesquiou brought the boy there from Paris, while Josephine came from Malmaison.

At the sight of the boy, the ex-Empress burst into tears. She took him on her lap, kissed him, went into ecstasies over him.

"How handsome he is! How graceful he is!"

She felt his plump arms and legs, and studied his features.

"He'll be as strong-willed as his father...."

She didn't tire of gazing at him. It was as though some mysterious force had suddenly transformed her tears, her sobs, her sleepless nights, all her great grief as a repudiated wife, into this fine boy, whom life adorned with its surest hopes. With her bitterness mingled a strange pride. The Empire's destiny was assured. Bonaparte was happy. The sacrifice to which she had agreed was not in vain.

Madame de Montesquiou approached her.

"Madame," she said, "we must take leave of Your Majesty."

Josephine started. She held the boy to her.

"So soon! Let me have him for a little longer. . . ."

Then, to amuse the boy and try and make him laugh, she played with him, and showed him a little monkey and some exotic birds which she had brought with her. Rather shy, the little King stared in surprise at this unknown lady, already aging and using too much make-up, who pestered him with her vehement caresses.

Finally he could stay no longer.

"Madame de Montesquiou," said Josephine, "I should like to have a portrait of him. I can assure you I shall always keep it with me."

"I shall get one painted for you, Madame," replied the governess.

The ex-Empress embraced the little King for the last time. With tears running down her cheeks again, she murmured:

"Ah, my dear child, some day you may know what you cost me!"

CHAPTER XII

OFF FOR THE GREAT ADVENTURE

NAPOLEON had decided to open his campaign against Russia in the summer. Meanwhile, he invited all his allies, the German princes, the King of Prussia, and his father-in-law and mother-in-law, the Austrian Emperor and Empress, to meet him during the month of May at Dresden and attend his Court there. Perhaps Russia, intimidated by all this parade of power, would draw back at the last moment.

Before proceeding to Dresden, Napoleon made himself physically fit for campaigning. He had grown fat and flabby. He must remedy that. On March 30, he betook himself, with Marie Louise, to Saint Cloud. There he hunted every day, galloping madly till he exhausted the strongest horses, even those stallions specially sent to him from America.

The little King, who was unwell, stayed behind at the Elysée. He did not leave there until April 8th, when he went to Meudon. The anniversary of his birth passed unobserved so far as official festivities were concerned. But he was given presents: a silver-mounted drum—his father's gift, of course; a humming top; a Polish lancer who performed exercises. His Aunt Caroline, the Queen of Naples, sent him a marvel of marvels: an enameled gold box, out

of which, thanks to an ingenious mechanism, a little bird hopped to sing its song.

Marie Louise, for her part, made ready to accompany Napoleon. Even though there was separation from him at the end of it, this journey delighted her.

She regarded the Empire as at the peak of its power and the Emperor as invincible. She imagined both of them to be unshakeable. In her heart, she rejoiced at the prospect not only of seeing her parents again, but also presenting them with the spectacle of her happiness and the love with which Napoleon surrounded her, and dazzling them with the splendor of her Court.

The Emperor and the Empress of the French set off for Dresden on May 9th, 1812. On the day before, Napoleon said good-by to his son. He took him in his arms, and said to him:

"Now, say '*Au revoir.*' Say '*Au revoir*, Mamma!'"

Despite this kind encouragement, the boy simply stammered something unintelligible.

"Lazy fellow!" his father chided him. "At your age, I was already fighting with Joseph."

Then he gave his final instructions to Madame de Montesquiou.

"Take good care of him, and write to me every day about him. . . ."

In any case, Napoleon had taken all necessary measures for the King of Rome's safety. He had appointed a divisional general as governor of the palace at Meudon.

For that matter, who in France would dare to raise a hand against the Empire? Order reigned throughout it. The example made at Caen had been a salutary one, and no mistake.

So the Emperor felt entitled to withdraw all effective troops. From the four corners of the Empire soldiers flocked

towards Russia. Little by little, France was emptied of all her young blood, like a heart squeezed to the last drop. Nobody was left behind but cripples. Everybody who could carry rifle and haversack footed it to the frontier. It was a long way, too....

While his parents, escorted by a brilliant retinue, proceeded to Dresden by way of Châlons, Mainz and Frankfort, the King of Rome led a quiet life at Meudon.

At the beginning of June, he was weaned, and suffered no ill-effects. For the last few months, as a matter of fact, he had been having soup and broth. From now on, he would be entitled every day to a substantial meal, with beef-tea, entrée, joint and sweet. Madame Auchard's job was done. She went into glorious retirement, overwhelmed with pensions and presents.

Napoleon heard the news at Königsberg. He wrote at once to his son's governess to congratulate her.

Madame de Montesquiou deserved the Emperor's esteem. She brought up the little King as though he were her own son. She provided against everything. As he was forever tumbling about, she had all the King's apartments at the Tuileries, the Elysée and Saint Cloud padded up to his height. She took great care of his intellectual and religious education. She insisted that, as became his rank, he should always wear princely clothes, in which lace, plumes, gold and silver were not spared.

But she also thought about his father far away. She planned a surprise for his birthday. She summoned Mademoiselle Aimée Thibault, the famous miniaturist, and got her to make a miniature of the King, whom she represented sitting on a sheep. The miniature was entrusted to Monsieur Debonnaire de Gif, who maintained communications between the Council of Ministers and the Emperor's headquarters.

Napoleon received it on August 3rd at Smolensk. No birthday present could have touched him more deeply. This miniature never left him. It was to be before his eyes at Saint Helena when death at length took pity on him.

Meanwhile Napoleon kept his Court at Dresden amid a whirl of festivities. The Austrian Emperor and kings and princes bowed down before him, rivaling one another in flattery and servility.

But were they sincere? Napoleon suspected trickery behind their honeyed smiles.

Above all, he wanted to win his mother-in-law over to his side. He was aware of her influence over her husband. He multiplied his overtures to her. He was assiduous in attentions. He wooed her. But, most of all, he counted on Marie Louise's help.

It was all in vain. In her body "as thin as a stick of asparagus," Maria Ludovica carried hatred of Napoleon bound up with her very life. Her stubborn, sullen soul was incapable of forgetting or forgiving.

To no purpose did Marie Louise give her the finest gowns from Leroy's, overwhelm her with jewelry and other presents. Maria Ludovica was not to be disarmed. The luxury with which her step-daughter surrounded herself struck her as a personal insult. The sight of the one hundred and fifty lackeys who attended the Empress of the French filled her with bile. It was an outrage for which sooner or later she would take her revenge.

For that matter, grievances of which she made no secret were not lacking to make her include Marie Louise in her execration of Bonaparte. Marie Louise had become too French. She was too fond of her husband. She was betraying the cause of the Habsburgs.

In fact, Marie Louise had occasion to show how sin-

cerely attached she was to Napoleon; for the hour of their separation had come.

The Emperor took leave of her on May 29th, 1812, at three o'clock in the morning. It was a heart-rending scene. Marie Louise wept and sobbed and clung to him. She vowed that she could never live without his dear presence.

On July 18th she was back at Saint Cloud. There a joyful surprise awaited her. The little King came to meet her with outstretched arms. He had fifteen teeth, and he could run about, falling in all directions; but he could not yet talk.

Marie Louise resumed her life as Empress. Napoleon had regulated her employment of her time, leaving nothing to chance or whim.

Her sole real joys were the letters Napoleon sent her. They were short notes, hastily scribbled, and she could manage to make them out only with Madame de Montesquiou's help. But what mattered a handwriting that would make the veriest schoolboy blush, when Napoleon put his heart into his letters?

On July 22nd, he wrote to Marie Louise from Gloubokoë:

"MY DEAR:

"I have received your letter of July 12th, and I see that you have had a little fever. You don't take enough care of yourself. I thank you for the news you give me about the little King. Everybody says that he is getting very strong and very greedy. As I write, you will have kissed him. That will have done you more good than anything else. Kiss him for me.

"Good-by, my dearest dear. Love me always. All yours.

"YOUR NAP."

CHAPTER XIII

THE PORTRAIT

NAPOLEON and his army started crossing the Niemen on June 23rd. On the same day, Rostopchin, the Governor of Moscow, wrote to the Czar:

> "Your empire has two powerful defenders: its extent and its climate. At Moscow the Emperor of Russia will be formidable. At Kazan he will be terrible. At Tobolsk he will be invincible."

For once, a soldier was a sound prophet. Day by day, Napoleon plunged a little further into the heart of Russia. So he went forward to meet his fate.

On September 6th, with his telescope glued to his eye, the Emperor of the French was inspecting the ground on which he hoped to crush the enemy on the morrow. He was mounted on a prancing white Arab steed. Beside him was Berthier, his Chief of Staff. Behind him were Yvan, his surgeon; his orderly officer, entrusted with map, compass and writing material; and Roustan, the Mameluke, who carried on his crupper, in a valise, Napoleon's famous gray greatcoat.

The Emperor studied the ground closely. Before him, in the background, he could see the shining course of the Moskowa, and, in the foreground, the village of Borodino, with the Gorki plateau in rear of it. Here the army corps

of the Russian generals, Barclay and Bagration, were strongly entrenched, with their lines linked by fortified works, the "great redoubt."

Napoleon frowned, thoughtfully.

"That's going to be hard to take," he murmured. "It will cost me a lot of men...."

A page came up behind him. He turned round.

"What is it?"

"Sire, Monsieur de Bausset has just arrived from Paris...."

"I'll see him..."

A few moments later, the prefect of the Palace bowed before his master.

"Sire," he said, "here are dispatches for you, handed to me by her Imperial Majesty."

Napoleon grasped them eagerly.

"Is that all?" he asked.

"No, Sire. I also have a packing-case to hand over to you."

"Very good," said the Emperor. "That will keep till later...."

"It contains a portrait, Sire."

At that word, Napoleon pricked up his ears.

"A portrait? Whose portrait?"

"A portrait of His Majesty the King of Rome."

"Why didn't you say so before, you fool? And where is it?"

"On top of my carriage. It's so big it wouldn't fit inside...."

Napoleon forgot everything else: Borodino, Bagration, the great redoubt. His one thought was to set eyes on his son's portrait. He turned to Berthier.

"We'll go back.... And you, Bausset—fetch me this portrait."

A few minutes later, Napoleon was in his tent, sitting on his iron bedstead with its green curtains. In front of him, Constant and Roustan, the Mameluke, made haste to open the packing-case. Napoleon quivered with impatience.

"You're no good for anything. You can't even take the nails out of a board!"

He was not far from lending a hand in person. But at length the gold frame of the portrait made its appearance. His son was before him. Gérard had represented the King in his cradle, playing with a cup and ball.

Napoleon stared at the portrait intently. Emotion choked him. He could only repeat:

"It's a wonderful portrait—wonderful! . . ."

All at once, he rushed out of his tent, and shouted to the close group of generals who were awaiting his orders:

"Come in! Come in, all of you! . . ."

Ney, Davout, Nansouty, Montbrun and others hurried in on one another's heels. The Emperor pointed to the portrait.

"Look at that, gentlemen! I need not tell you that, if my son were fifteen, he would be here not in a portrait, but in person. . . . Come on, have a look at it! Isn't it fine?"

He could not keep his delight to himself. He wanted everybody to share it.

"Put it on a folding-chair in front of my tent," he told Constant. "I want the whole army to see it. I want all my bearded veterans to see it."

His valet did as he was told. But no sooner was the portrait outside, bathed in the soft light of the midday sun, than Napoleon shuddered.

"No, no!" he exclaimed. "Bring it back! He's too young to look upon a battlefield!"

Napoleon was far from having exhausted his delight in this portrait of his son. In Moscow afterwards, pointing to

it hanging in his bedchamber in the Kremlin, he said to Rapp:

"My son is the finest boy in France!"

Meanwhile, he was eager to thank her who had sent him this portrait which he was so delighted to see.

"Ménéval," he said, "give me a little sheet of pretty paper and a good pen. I really must write to my dear Louise about this."

He took a gilt-edged sheet of paper and a goose-quill, and wrote:

> "MY DEAREST DEAR,
>
> "I am very tired. Bausset has just delivered to me the portrait of the King. It is a masterpiece. I thank you so much for your thought of me. It is as beautiful as yourself. I shall write to you more fully tomorrow. *Adio, mio bene.*
>
> "NAP."

He folded the sheet of paper, and handed it to Ménéval.

"Send that to the lady of my thoughts, the queen of my heart!"

Faithful to his promise, on September 8th he wrote to Marie Louise from the battlefield of Borodino. Upon it lay forty thousand dead, side by side with thirty thousand wounded, most of them dying. Their cries filled the air. Quite naturally, Napoleon wrote:

> "... Personally I was in no danger at all. I am in the best of health. It is rather cold...."

CHAPTER XIV

DISASTER

It was indeed turning cold. From now on, it got colder and colder every day.

On September 14th, Napoleon entered Moscow. He imagined he was at the end of his troubles. Alexander would surely admit himself beaten and sue for peace. But the Russians, as they retreated, had set fire to the city, and no peace proposals were forthcoming.

Beside the ruins of Moscow, three-quarters reduced to ashes, Napoleon waited in vain for a month for any overtures from Alexander. As time went on, he became anxious. But he let nothing of his anxiety appear in the letters which he wrote to the Empress. He talked to her as though she were a child.

It was from Moscow, on October 14th, that he sent her this letter:

"My dear Louise:

"My greatest pleasure is to read your letters. It is the first thing I do when the express arrives. They are as charming as yourself, they depict your beautiful soul, and all your fine qualities are to be seen in them. You are perfect. I am in the best of health. We have had the first snow, but it is not cold. I do not think that I can come to Paris yet, and it is a very long way to fetch you to Poland. Embrace my son three times for me.

"*Adio, miou ben.* All yours.

"Nap."

At length Napoleon decided to retreat from Moscow. The retreat began on October 19th.

Now the Russians witnessed the arrival of their best ally, General Winter. Ceaselessly harried by the Cossacks, decimated by the cold, short of food, short of transport, short of ambulances, little by little the Grand Army dwindled. Reduced to fifty thousand men, amid indescribable misery it retraced the path which it had gloriously followed in the summer. The thermometer sank to 22° below zero. Every night thousands of men lay down, never to rise again.

Of this disaster Napoleon did not breathe a word in his letters to Marie Louise.

"My cause prospers," he wrote, optimistically. "I am on my way back to you. . . ."

The grip of Kutusof's Cossacks tightened more ferociously every day. Yet it was not from them that Napoleon was dealt his hardest blow. It was from France.

On November 6th, at Dorogoburg, three days' march from Smolensk, Comte Daru presented himself. He was the bearer of urgent dispatches. Napoleon opened them. They contained startling news. In Paris, on October 23rd, a conspiracy hatched by General Mallet had all but overthrown his Empire.

Napoleon was overwhelmed. To be sure, it was something that Marie Louise had not been affected by it. The truth had been carefully kept from her. She had been told that it was just a few unimportant mutineers who had made a bit of a row, and she had believed it.

But the Emperor saw the matter in a different light. This affair bared before his eyes the fundamental defect in his system of government. It served to show that a handful of adventurers might suffice to ruin his whole achievement.

In short, did not his whole Empire depend on himself? If he died, would anything be left of his work? Why had nobody thought about his wife, about his son? In the old days, the death of the King was greeted by the words: "The King is dead. Long live the King!" The Monarchy went on like a flowing stream. Was the Napoleonic dynasty to be only a trickle of water which any scoundrel could cut off to his own advantage? Was it only to this end that Napoleon had fought for fifteen years, that he had repudiated the wife he loved, that he had married a daughter of the Habsburgs, that a son had been born to him?

If Napoleon had listened only to the voice of his wrath, his impatience, he would have set off for Paris on the spot. But how could he desert his Grand Army in such straits, after the trials it had undergone for him?

So he stayed with it. But he champed the bit of his impatience as he accompanied those few thousands of walking skeletons in rags in their painful progress across the white plains, on which the cold and the Cossacks laid deadly ambushes for them.

Between the 26th and the 29th of November, what was left of the Grand Army crossed the Beresina.

Finally, at Smorgoni on December 5th, Napoleon handed over the command of his troops to Murat, and, together with Caulaincourt, flung himself into a sleigh.

For some little time Marie Louise had been depressed and listless. It was several days since she had heard from the Emperor. Around her she could detect growing disquiet and distrust. Her ladies were worried about husbands, sons, brothers. Alarming rumors circulated. Military bulletins were of no avail in reassuring public opinion. They were like damp squibs. The latest, that of December 7th, even gave a glimpse of disaster.

On the night of December 18th, 1812, Marie Louise went to bed feeling wretched. She was cold, and her loneliness weighed upon her. She had grown thin, and she slept badly.

All at once she sat up in bed. What was that noise? Another insurrection? Had mutiny broken out again?

At the door, the "red" woman who slept across the threshold had risen to her feet. With arms outspread, she was vainly trying to keep back a man as hairy as a bear. The intruder thrust her aside and hurried across the room towards Marie Louise. He flung off his fur coat, his fur cap.

"Napoleon!"

"My dear Louise!"

He took her in his arms, pulled her out of bed, and proceeded to cover her with kisses.

The "red" woman judged it unnecessary to await orders. She tip-toed out of the room.

CHAPTER XV

AT ODDS WITH THE POPE

NAPOLEON'S first concern after his return was to dismiss Frochot, the prefect of the Seine department. Two days after his arrival in Paris, he vehemently vented his spleen before the Senate.

But it was no good crying over spilt milk. Above all, it was essential to see that the same thing should not happen again. What was the best way? Napoleon discovered it. It was to crown the King of Rome.

Then, if Napoleon should happen to die, there would be no room for argument. His son would be there, crown on head, scepter in hand. There would be nothing to do but shout: "The Emperor is dead. Long live the Emperor!"

But who could confer upon the coronation such luster, such prestige, such supreme authority that all men would accept it without a murmur? Who could grant that divine right which had constituted the strength of the late monarchy? Only God, or, in default of Him, His representative, the Pope.

It so happened that Pope Pius VII was not far from Paris. In the course of the summer, he had been brought from Savoy to Fontainebleau, where he was more or less a prisoner.

Napoleon did not disguise from himself the fact that negotiation with the Pope would be no easy matter. He had

treated Christ's Vicar pretty cavalierly. By simple decree, he had annexed the Patrimony of Saint Peter to the Kingdom of Italy. At his orders, on July 6th, 1809, Colonel Radet had put the master of the Vatican under arrest and escorted him to Genoa. Since then, Napoleon had kept the Pope on his travels, had him under his own eye, and paid no attention to his bulls of excommunication.

All this, to be sure, was a bad start; but Napoleon had confidence in himself. He rushed the business. On January 19th 1813, he arrived at Fontainebleau without warning, like a jack in the box. He was accompanied by Marie Louise, whose Christian sentiments were his best asset, and his whole Court.

For five days, alternately coaxing and threatening, Napoleon laid siege to His holiness. He stroked him down, but in such a way that the iron hand could be felt under the velvet glove. He flattered the Pope. He lavished promises upon him. He was ready to make the greatest concessions to him.

"But I am a prisoner," objected the Pope.

Surely he must be joking? He was the Emperor's honored guest. By way of proof, the whole Court were on their knees, disputing for the privilege of kissing the Pope's shoe and receiving his blessing.

"Crown my son, Holy Father," the Emperor sang his siren song, "and I will give you back your throne, your States. . . ."

Little by little, the old man let himself be won over. On January 25th he signed a new concordat. Napoleon returned to Paris in triumph. On February 1st, he communicated to the Privy Council a decree providing for a regency. He announced that the King of Rome's coronation would take place at Notre Dame on March 7th.

But time went on without the Pope definitely making

up his mind. For the Italian cardinals—the "black" cardinals—were up in arms. In their turn, they besieged the Holy Father. They reproached him with being weak and committing himself to a mistaken policy. Once more the head of the Church said "Amen," and, on March 24th, he revoked his signature of the concordat.

Napoleon was bitterly disappointed; but he was not the man to let himself be worsted. What the Church refused to him he would obtain from his people.

Was there any finer crown on earth than that of popularity? The affection of millions of Frenchmen would serve just as well as the holy oil, if not better. But, to win their affection, Napoleon must show himself to his people. He must cease to be a deity hidden in the depths of a tabernacle.

So he dragged Marie Louise all over Paris with him. Drives and visits to factories, workshops and hospitals succeeded one another. At the Invalides, Napoleon got the Empress to taste the soldiers' soup and introduced to her four centenarians who were the pride of the place.

As usual, Marie Louise followed his lead shyly, sulkily. She never could find the right thing to do, the right thing to say, which would win all hearts.

But Napoleon had more success with the King of Rome. Every day the people of Paris cheered the heir to the throne as he drove along the boulevards to the Bois de Boulogne, blowing kisses to the passers-by all along the route.

On one occasion, wearing a greatcoat of nacarat velvet trimmed with chinchilla and a cap of the same fur, the King of Rome attended a review of the Guard by his father in the Place du Carrousel.

The Emperor took him up on his horse, and lancers, light cavalry and dragoons cheered father and son as they marched past. The boy laughed and clapped his hands.

With tears in his eyes, Napoleon exclaimed loudly enough for everybody within earshot to overhear him:

"Look at him! He seems to know that all these fine fellows are my friends."

Napoleon was proud of his son, and, despite his busy life, his concern with his preparations for his fresh campaign, he still found time to pay attention to the boy. He loaded him with presents of trumpets, drums and toy cannon.

He continued to play with the boy too. Madame de Montesquiou brought him to Napoleon at meal-times. Napoleon teased him; but by now the boy showed a character of his own. He pouted or flew into a temper; and, if he was refused something he wanted, he stamped his foot and cried:

"But I want it!"

For he had cut all his teeth and he was beginning to talk.

One day, his father offered him a mouthful of mutton; but, just as his red lips were about to close on it, the Emperor took it out of his reach. He did this several times. Finally the boy expressed disgust. Napoleon was surprised.

"He's like that," said Madame de Montesquiou. "He can't stand being fooled. He's proud and sensitive."

"Ah," exclaimed the Emperor, giving his son a kiss, "that's just what I want him to be!"

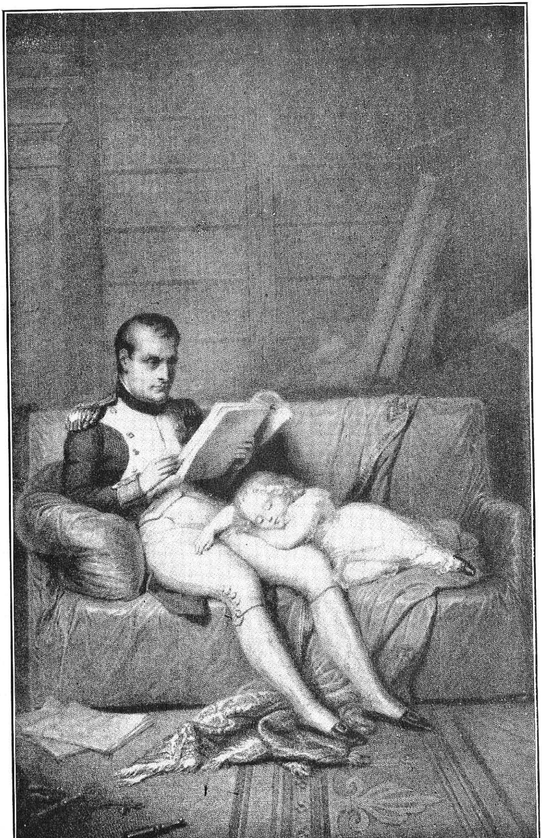
April 11th, 1813, was a memorable date for the King of Rome. It was the first time His Majesty wore breeches: blue kerseymere breeches.

Napoleon was delighted with him.

"He's a real little man!" he cried.

Ah, why wasn't he really a man; a man whom Napoleon could take with him; a second self who could aid him in the heavy task ahead of him?

For Napoleon's departure was at hand. On April 15th,



NAPOLEON AND HIS SON

the Emperor left Saint Cloud at four o'clock in the morning to take command of his army. A fresh campaign was about to begin. Marie Louise had been appointed Regent and would rule the Empire during Napoleon's absence.

CHAPTER XVI

SON-IN-LAW AND FATHER-IN-LAW

IN the course of the earlier months of the year 1813, Napoleon had lived through many an anxious hour. He had finally realized that it was England who was stirring up Europe against him. Sheltered by her surrounding seas, slowly but surely she was weaving around him a net with living links, which were mended as fast as he broke them.

A kind of holy war was in preparation all over Europe. With great difficulty, Napoleon had bled his Empire once more. He had assembled one hundred and fifty thousand men; but quantity was no substitute for quality.

Finally, a formidable question presented itself. What was Austria going to do?

Napoleon could not bring himself to believe that his father-in-law would turn against him and act contrary to the interests of his own daughter and his grandson. Nevertheless, Napoleon needed Austria, and he must humor her. In this task Marie Louise would help him. Meanwhile Napoleon felt that some military success might impress the Austrian Emperor and Empress and their Ministers.

On May 2nd, he crushed the Russians and the Prussians at Lutzen. Austria had been showing herself more and more lukewarm towards him. That would give her something to think about.

On May 10th, Marie Louise wrote to her father. Into her letter she introduced this sentence:

"I positively believe, quite between ourselves, that the Emperor will soon have a million men under arms...."

But this threat failed to intimidate the Vienna government. On May 16th, Napoleon gave an audience to Count Bubna, whom the Austrian Emperor had sent to him to submit conditions on which peace might be concluded.

With astonishment, Napoleon listened to a series of startling propositions. It was suggested that he should surrender the Illyrian provinces, Poland, Spain, the Confederation of the Rhine, part of Italy...

"Count Bubna," he broke out, "is it proposed that I should purchase peace at the price of dishonor? Am I to sacrifice first my honor, then my wife and my son, and finally my dynasty?..."

These demands made him burn with indignation.

"Is my wife, the best of all wives, to be made a victim? Is France once more to be handed over to the Jacobins? Is that what you want? No, Count Bubna, I will not have France come to hate Austrian blood."

But Napoleon understood. Austria had shown her hand. He must stop her from playing it. The only way was victory. On May 20th and 21st, at Bautzen, he won a victory over the Russians and the Prussians which he regarded as decisive.

But all around him bad omens were appearing. Clouds drifted across his star. His allies of yesterday, the Bavarians, the Würtemburgers and the Saxons, deserted him one by one. In the south, Murat, and in the north, Bernadotte, were making ready to stab him in the back....

Finally, he could feel the hostile breath of Fate upon his face. At Lutzen Marshal Bessières was killed. At Bautzen, within a few yards of Napoleon, a bullet carried away

Duroc: Duroc, his friend for twenty years, his most faithful comrade, the confident of his troubles and his love-affairs. It was too hard a blow. Napoleon broke down and wept.

"Poor man," murmured the veteran grousers of the Guard as they looked at him, "he has lost one of his children!"

Austria cleverly took advantage of this moment to offer her official mediation. Napoleon accepted it, and on June 4th he signed the armistice of Pleswitz.

Quite naturally, it was Metternich who was entrusted with presenting to the Emperor of the French the conditions on which the Allies were ready to treat. Napoleon received him at the Marcolini palace in Dresden on June 26th. The audience began at noon.

As he made his way to the gallery where the Emperor was to receive him, the Austrian Chancellor saw all around him courtiers and gold-bedecked generals with anxious faces. Berthier approached him and whispered in his ear:

"Don't forget that Europe needs peace, and France above all. All she wants is peace."

Metternich felt a wild joy rising within his breast. At last the diplomat's word was about to break the invincible Caesar's sword.

Napoleon came forward to meet him, with his sword at his side, and his cockaded beaver hat under his arm.

"So here you are, Monsieur von Metternich," he said. "I am glad to see you. But, if you want peace, why do you come so late?"

The Chancellor bowed his long head deferentially.

"To give peace to the world, Sire," he murmured, "depends only on you."

"You think so? In any case, your master does not make my task any the easier. I win two victories, and my weak-

ened enemies are on the point of treating for peace. All at once, you come in between us. You talk to me about armistice and mediation, and you talk to them about alliance. Everything is in a muddle again. But for you, peace would have been made already.... Come now, confess that Austria is no longer on my side. She is my enemy. By now you have two hundred thousand men ready under Schwarzenberg.... You think you are in a position to dictate terms to me, do you?"

"Not at all, Sire. You are strangely mistaken about our intentions."

But Napoleon's nerves were on edge. He paced quickly up and down the gallery, dragging the Chancellor with him.

"Listen to me, Metternich. I am ready to make peace. But I will die sooner than sign a dishonorable peace. As I wrote to the Emperor: my honor above all, and then peace! Your Sovereigns who are born to their thrones can let themselves be defeated a score of times, and still return to their capitals. I cannot do that, because I am a soldier who has risen to the throne. My rule would not survive for a moment if I ceased to be strong, and therefore to be feared...."

The Chancellor never said a word. He kept his eyes half-closed, withdrawn into himself, but ready to make a spring. The Emperor came to a standstill. He tried to look Metternich straight in the eyes; but the Chancellor avoided his look. Then, in a confidential tone, Napoleon went on:

"I can guess your game, Metternich. Your Government is seeking to take advantage of my difficulties, and even add to them as much as it can, in order to recover part of what it has lost. A question presents itself for you. Can you hold me to ransom without fighting; or must you

draw the sword and line up with my enemies? . . . Very well, let's talk business. . . ."

Metternich promptly launched forth into high diplomatic considerations. He talked about respect for rights. He talked about a peace guaranteed by a league of independent States. He lost himself in the clouds. His slyness exasperated Napoleon.

"Can't you speak more plainly?" he cried. "Don't forget that I am a soldier, better at breaking than bending! . . . I offer you Illyria in exchange for your neutrality. Does that suit you? My army is quite strong enough to bring the Russians and the Prussians to reason. I simply ask for your neutrality."

"Ah, Sire," replied Metternich, "things have reached such a point that we can no longer remain neutral. . . . We must be either for you or against you."

His tone was both honeyed and hinting. Napoleon understood that he was being invited to make a bargain. He led the Chancellor into the map-room.

"What do you want?" he asked.

Metternich's hand clutched at the map of Europe like a claw. As it moved about on the map, Napoleon felt that every movement it made was tearing away a piece of his own flesh. He gasped, as though a noose were suddenly knotted round his neck.

"What?" he cried. "Not only Illyria, but also half Italy, Holland, Spain, Poland, the Confederation of the Rhine? In short, you want everything!"

His lip curled.

"So such is your spirit of moderation! . . . In fact, peace is a mere pretext. What you are all aiming at is the dismemberment of the French Empire. With a stroke of the pen, you would knock down the ramparts of Dantzig,

Magdeburg, Antwerp, Mantua, a score of other fortresses whose keys I obtained only as the reward of victory!"

Napoleon dragged Metternich back into the gallery. He marched up and down like a madman, kneading his hat in his hands.

"And it is when the French flag still floats at the mouth of the Vistula; it is when my victorious armies are at the gates of Berlin and Breslau; it is when I am here in person at the head of three hundred thousand men—it is at such a time that Austria flatters herself that, without even drawing the sword, she can make me sign such terms! Without even drawing the sword! This piece of presumption is an outrage!"

He flung his hat on the floor and trampled on it, in a rage. He was white in the face. His eyes were wild. His breath came short.

Impassive, with a slight smile at the corner of his mouth, Metternich waited for the storm to blow over.

"And it is my father-in-law," Napoleon went on, "who lends himself to such a proposal! It is he who sends you here. But he is widely mistaken if he thinks that a mutilated throne would serve as any shelter for his daughter and his grandson in France."

Napoleon swung round. He advanced upon the Chancellor. Metternich recoiled. Napoleon seized him by the collar. He stared into his eyes.

"Aha, Metternich, how much did England pay you to get you to play this part against me?"

Metternich's face went ashen. He staggered as though he had been hit. A murky gleam flashed from his eyes. It was quickly veiled by his heavy lids.

Napoleon bit his lip. He realized that he had gone too far. He had lit a flame of hatred in his visitor's heart which only death could quench.

The two of them resumed their discussion. Hours went by, but the opponents went on taking one another's measure. It was a fight between a tiger, roaring and clawing at a void, and a snake, shifty, unseizable, who dodged out of the way and tirelessly writhed his murderous coils forward again.

"If you go to war again, Sire," Metternich said, softly, "fortune may desert France. You have only an army of boys. . . ."

Napoleon jumped at the insult. His reply rang like a box on impertinent ears.

"You are no soldier. You do not know what takes place in a soldier's soul. I grew up on the battlefield, and a man like me thinks little of the lives of a million men. For that matter, of those who died in Russia only thirty thousand were French. The rest were all Poles and Germans. . . ."

"You forget that you are talking to a German," remarked Metternich.

Napoleon stopped short. He knew that he had made a slip. Metternich drove home his advantage.

"Why say such a thing to me within four walls?" he asked, insolently. "Open the doors! Let your words ring out from one end of France to the other! It is not the cause I represent which will be the loser. . . ."

The Emperor said nothing for some little time. He picked up his hat. A year or two earlier, Metternich would have presented it to him on bended knee. Then Napoleon said:

"So I did a very foolish thing when I married an Austrian archduchess?"

Metternich's reply was deliberate.

"Since Your Majesty asks me my opinion, I shall say

frankly that Napoleon the conqueror is doing such a thing now. . . ."

"Then the Emperor Francis wants to dethrone his daughter?"

Metternich felt that he had his adversary at his mercy.

"The Emperor," he answered, "is before all else a Sovereign. The interests of his peoples will always come first in his decisions."

Napoleon shrugged his shoulders. His anger flared up again.

"In short, I made an irreparable mistake when I married the archduchess. I hoped to merge the past with the present. I was wrong. I see now how far wrong I was. . . . My throne may collapse. But I will bury the world under its ruins."

It was the last spurt of his wrath. Night was falling. It was nearly eight o'clock. Napoleon felt tired.

For a few moments, he sought comfort in the thought of his son. It was for the little King that he was fighting. He recalled that fair head which had been the corner-stone of a fine future. Now that future was falling to pieces in all directions.

He stared at Metternich again. This was the man whom he had overwhelmed with honors. This was the man whom he had trusted. This was the courtier who had drunk the King of Rome's health before he was born. What bitter irony!

Yet, despite everything, he felt a kind of respect for Metternich. He remembered Talleyrand, who was betraying him. Why had he not such a faithful servant as Metternich?

He must make one more effort. Where threats had failed, flattery might succeed. He owed so much to his personal

power of attraction. He forced himself to be friendly, coaxing.

"Well," he said, as he showed Metternich out in person, "we shall meet again, I hope. . . ."

He laid his hand on Metternich's shoulder. His tone was one of good fellowship.

"Do you know what I think? You're not going to make war on me."

They reached the door, and darkness swallowed them up. Metternich turned slowly towards the Emperor. His eyes gleamed with all the iciness of his stubborn soul. He did not lower them as he murmured:

"You are lost, Sire. . . ."

CHAPTER XVII

INNOCENT VICTIMS

NAPOLEON saw an abyss yawning at his feet. Perhaps he felt that it was fated to swallow him up. If he was to die, he wanted first to see the woman he loved. If this was to be his last fight, he craved to steep his soul in affection once more. He missed Marie Louise. He longed to hold her to his heart again. He asked her to come and join him on July 24th at Mainz.

Ever since he left Paris, scarcely a day had passed without his writing to her. He treated his wife more or less like a child. He went out of his way to hide the truth from her, all the more since it assumed the form of definite, approaching disaster. At the gravest moments, he took it upon himself to deceive her, to feign confidence and cheerfulness, to try and entertain her. On the morrow of his interview with Metternich, he wrote to her:

> "... What you tell me about the little King's jealousy made me laugh. I wish I could see him. Give him three kisses from me. Have you seen the elephant in the Zoological Gardens? ..."

The Empress left the King of Rome behind her at Saint Cloud. She was fond of him, to be sure; but her concern with him scarcely went beyond getting Isabey and Gérard

to paint portraits of him. So she set off with an easy mind, trusting entirely in Madame de Montesquiou.

Indeed, in everything the little King's governess did, she deserved the confidence which the Emperor had placed in her. Not only did she look after the boy's health. She also concerned herself with his education and sought to develop his mind.

The boy was tall and strong for his age, but his intelligence was backward. So Madame de Montesquiou gave him as a playmate little Albert, the son of Madame Froment, one of the "red" women. He was a year older than the King of Rome, and he had no idea of the respect due to His Majesty. The two boys played, quarreled and sometimes fought together.

One day, Albert wanted a wheel-barrow, and the King refused to give it up.

"You're not going to have it!" he said.

Albert persisted and tried to pull the wheel-barrow away. When the little King held on to it, Albert hit him. The little King looked at him. He was quite conscious of the sacrilege which his playmate had committed.

"Supposing somebody had seen you!" he exclaimed. "But you needn't worry. I won't tell anybody."

Thanks to this comradeship, the prince made progress. He talked more fluently, and Madame de Montesquiou started teaching him his alphabet. He was full of life and energy, and so restless that nets had to be put round his bed and his close-stool to catch him when he wriggled off them.

Now that he was old enough to understand, his governess lost no opportunity of taking him in hand and teaching him how to behave.

One day, in a fit of temper, he rolled on the floor, screaming at the top of his voice. Without saying a word,

Madame de Montesquiou closed the shutters and the windows. Surprised to find himself suddenly in the dark, the prince stopped screaming.

"Mamma Quiou," he asked, "why have you shut the windows?"

"For fear anybody should hear you," replied his governess. "Do you think the French people would ever want you for their prince, if they knew you got into a temper like that?"

The boy was dumbfounded. He thought that over.

"Do you think anybody heard me?" he said. "I hope nobody did. I'm sorry, Mamma Quiou. I won't do it again. . . ."

Another time, when he was out for a walk, the King of Rome caught sight of two scapegraces of his own age playing in the gutter. They were ragged and dirty, but they seemed to be having a very good time. The prince was so keenly interested in their gambols in the mire that he had to be dragged away almost by force.

He said nothing for the moment. But an hour later, at the château, Madame de Montesquiou felt a little hand pulling at her skirt, and a little voice, the voice of a boy clad in silk and velvet, begged humbly:

"Mamma Quiou, if I'm very good, will you let me go and roll in the mud?"

CHAPTER XVIII

DEFEAT

On August 2nd, Marie Louise left Napoleon at Mainz and returned to Saint Cloud by way of Cologne, Aix-la-Chapelle, Liége and Compiègne. She had to make haste, for Napoleon had decided that at the end of the month she should go to Cherbourg to open the new docks there.

For his part, he set off to rejoin his army. The hour was decisive. By now Napoleon knew where he stood. The Congress of Prague had arrived at no conclusion, and Austria had openly lined up with Prussia and Russia. But Napoleon's fortunes had sunk so low that one enemy more to fight scarcely mattered.

For his birthday, on August 15th, he received some verses sent him by his son. For what purported to be the work of a poet of twenty-nine months, they had a pretty turn of phrase.

"Caresses once were all my dower
To tell my thoughts to you.
I offer you the tribute of a flower
As simple as the love one feels at two.

A hundred kisses now I must repay,
And I myself would haste to give you these,
If I could follow in my father's way
As fast as he pursues his enemies."

Napoleon smiled, with a bitter twist at the corners of his mouth. How much longer would he be able to "pursue his enemies" in accordance with the hopes expressed by the author of the poem? . . . Meanwhile, he made ready to sell his life dearly.

On August 27th, at Dresden, with 110,000 men, he crushed 200,000 Russians, Prussians and Austrians. On August 29th, he wrote to Marie Louise:

> "MY DEAR,
> "I have had a fine battle. I have given Prince Schwarzenberg and the Emperor Alexander a good hiding. Papa Francis's troops have never been so bad. They are badly clothed, half naked. I took 25,000 prisoners, 30 colors and a number of cannon. I am going to send you all these."

The next day he added:

> ". . . . Give the little King two kisses from me. I am told that he is now talking like an orator. How I wish I could hear him! . . . The Russians have burned ten small towns and villages in Bohemia. That won't please Papa Francis."

Then came Leipzig, that battle of nations. It lasted for three days, from the 16th to the 18th of October. Napoleon thought he had victory in his grasp, but it escaped him. His allies, the Saxons, deserted him on the field of battle. It was his turn to experience defeat. He lost fifty thousand men.

He proceeded to beat a retreat in all haste with the remnant of his army. A fresh enemy fell upon them: typhus. Napoleon was in flight; but he could still strike back terribly against human opponents. On October 30th, at Hanau, he brushed aside the Bavarians and the Austrians when they tried to cut off his retreat. He sent

Marie Louise the score of colors which he had captured in earlier battles. They would serve to diminish the effect of the disaster in Paris.

On November 2nd he crossed the Rhine. A week later, at night, he arrived at Saint Cloud, where the Court, without news of him for a month, was a prey to the worst anxiety.

He embraced Marie Louise and looked around for his son. Where was the little King? He was being put to bed.

"I'll go and see him," said the Emperor.

He made his way to the boy's apartments. Clad in a long white nightshirt, the boy was on his knees at a faldstool, with his hands clasped and his golden curls gleaming softly in the light of the wax candles. He was saying his prayers, obediently repeating the words whispered to him by Madame de Montesquiou, standing beside him.

"Dear God, let Papa . . . grant us peace . . . for the happiness . . . of France. . . ."

Napoleon swept back the lock that curled down his forehead. He held on to the door-jamb. He dare not go in now. Peace? Did peace depend on him any more?

CHAPTER XIX

SHADOW AND LIGHT

NAPOLEON had lunched alone, just as he used to do, at his little mahogany table. He waved away the head waiter and the prefect of the palace, who, standing beside him with his hat under his arm, had attended him at his meal. He wanted to be alone....

He put his elbow on the table, laid his broad brow on his delicate hand, and reflected. This time it was France herself that he must defend. But with what? Where was he to find troops? He had squeezed the country to its last drop of blood, its last cent. The best blood of its youth had been drunk up by the plains of Italy, Germany and Russia. There was nothing left for the soil of France but dregs.

"Ah," Napoleon sighed, "if only I had those gallant fellows I lost in Russia!"

It was not only they he lacked. There were also the 170,000 men whom he had left behind in the fortresses of Germany. They would soon have to surrender.

To be sure, on November 8th, at Frankfort, the Allies had made a peace proposal to him; but it was on such terms that he had been bound to reject it. Now, in the eyes of the world, it was he who seemed bent on war....

War? Whichever way he turned, his own dreaded face encountered not the glorious face of triumph which had

so often smiled upon him, but a face which wore the hideous mask of defeat. The enemy, squatting on the other side of the Rhine like some monstrous devil-fish, had launched three gigantic tentacles against France on New Year's Day, 1814.

Napoleon shrugged his shoulders. How easy his task would be if he had to fight only against the enemy outside!

But now opponents perhaps even more formidable were multiplying inside the country. The morale of the people was low, and discontent was general. In the South and West, young conscripts were deserting and taking refuge in the mountains and the forests. The middle classes, hard hit by the economic crisis and the slump in stocks, were grumbling. The Legislative Assembly, on whom the Emperor had leaned for help, had failed him, thus paying off its old scores. Treason gnawed at the very heart of the country. The highest posts in the Empire bred cankers. Talleyrand was maintaining relations with the Emperor of Russia and the Austrian Emperor, and making ready to sell himself to the highest bidder. The nobility, to whom Napoleon had restored their estates and their fortunes, openly longed for the return of the Bourbons.

Napoleon looked around him. He found himself alone—alone and ill, worn and aged. He had lost his best comrades: Lannes, Bessières, Duroc.... The rest thought only about peace. Even after Leipzig, when he contemplated marching on Berlin, some of his marshals had cried:

"Haven't enough of us been killed? Are we all to leave our bones abroad?"

But it should not be. Sooner death than surrender without a struggle! And what about his son? Was he to bequeath only ruin and dishonor to the little King of Rome?

His great dream had collapsed. But with its remnants he would bestir himself to reconstruct a throne for his son.

Quick, let cannon, muskets, cartridges be manufactured! Let the fortresses be put in repair! Let hospitals be established! The enemy were at hand. Ah, if only he had a month longer! But he must hasten to help Macdonald, Marmont and Victor, who had had to abandon the Rhine and fall back on Champagne. Let his men be equipped! How many were they? Fifty thousand. And the enemy numbered over four hundred thousand! Napoleon laughed.

"Fifty thousand men and myself. That makes one hundred and fifty thousand."

Napoleon dragged Marie Louise with him all over Paris. He wanted to show himself everywhere at once: at the theater, in the workshops, on parade, in the factories, in the barracks. To all who shirked, to all who hesitated, to all who doubted, he wanted to say:

"See, here I am! I will defend you. I will save you. Trust me!"

Often he took the little King with him, clad as a colonel of the Polish lancers or as an officer of the horse grenadiers. With outstretched arms, he showed the boy, all gold lace and plumes, to the crowd. They cheered despite themselves. It was not for himself that Napoleon called upon their aid, asked fresh sacrifices from them. It was for his son.

The only hours of respite Napoleon knew were those which his son gave him. It was in the company of this boy of three that he found new strength to go on struggling, to overcome the feeling of nausea which rose in his throat like sour froth in the presence of the cowardice of those who owed him everything.

How he spoiled the boy! He gave him wooden horses, tin sets of doll's furniture, a doll dressed as a Chinaman,

a miniature billiard-table, a game of goose and dozens of other toys. He got a Mameluke's uniform made for him, with a crimson velvet cap crowned with an egret, a pelisse of green velvet, and breeches of Louviers cloth, the whole embroidered, spangled and done to perfection. He paraded the little King, thus arrayed and booted like the cat in the fairytale, all over the Tuileries palace.

Some of the King of Rome's doings delighted the Emperor. The boy was kind-hearted. One day, from a window, he caught sight of a little boy in the street, in mourning, holding on to his mother with one hand and waving a roll of paper in the other.

"Why is that little boy dressed in black?" he asked.

"Probably because his father is dead," replied Madame de Montesquiou.

"And what is he doing with that paper?"

"Perhaps it's a petition he wants to present to you."

"Then I'd like to see him," said the King of Rome.

The young petitioner was sent for. He explained that his father had been killed during the last campaign, and that as a result his mother and himself were reduced to poverty. A pension would be welcome.

"I'll tell Papa," said the prince.

The next day, indeed, he said to his father:

"Papa, here's a petition from a little boy whose father died because of you. Give him a pension."

Napoleon smiled. That "because of you" was not lacking in piquancy. He lifted his son up and kissed him.

"You are a good boy," he said. "I'll issue an order for a pension this very day."

By this time the little prince was able to trot all over the palace. One day he ran ahead of his governess to the door of the Emperor's study. It was guarded by a footman in a green coat and black breeches.

Isabey

L'AIGLON, SON OF NAPOLEON

"Let me in," said the boy. "I want to see Papa."

"No, Sire, I cannot let you in," replied the footman, whose orders were strict.

The boy stamped his foot.

"Why not? I am the little King!"

"But Your Majesty is all alone."

The Emperor had given orders that his son was not to be admitted unless he was accompanied by Madame de Montesquiou. Finally the governess made her appearance. Strengthened by this reënforcement, the prince cried proudly:

"Open the door: it is the will of the little King!"

The footman opened the door of the study, and announced in a ringing voice:

"His Majesty the King of Rome! . . ."

His Majesty, head held high, strode in like a grown-up.

A ministerial council was just coming to an end. With no eyes for anybody but his father, the boy ran towards him with outstretched arms. The Emperor took him in his arms, turned him around, and said severely:

"You have not greeted these gentlemen, Sire. Come on, greet them! . . .

The boy turned to the Ministers and bowed to them. Then he raised his hands to his lips and blew kisses to all of them. Napoleon sat down again, with his son in his arms.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, with a laugh, "I hope that nobody can say that I have neglected my son's education. As you see, he can be both ceremonious and childishly sincere."

CHAPTER XX

THE LAST KISS

It was January 23rd, 1814: a Sunday. It was cold. Bad news swept Paris in pestilential waves. To the north and east the enemy were advancing. The people were fleeing before the Cossacks and the Uhlans, who were laying the countryside waste, burning villages and raping women.

Napoleon felt that the wind of panic was freezing the people of Paris to the heart. He had waited until the very last moment. Now he must set off to fight the invaders and drive them back. But, in his absence, who would defend his capital and his wife and his son, whom he must leave behind him?

After thinking things over thoroughly, he had found the right way, and he had arranged the setting which was essential for the accomplishment of his plan.

After Mass, he left the chapel with Marie Louise and made his way to the Hall of the Marshals, where six hundred officers of the National Guard were assembled. As soon as he entered the room, a door at the opposite side opened, and Madame de Montesquiou came in, carrying the King of Rome.

As a delicate compliment, the prince was clad in the uniform of an officer of the National Guard, with a beaver hat adorned with a silver cockade and white plumes. On

his breast he wore the grand cross of the Legion of Honor in diamonds.

Napoleon and Marie Louise each took hold of one of the boy's hands and went forward into the midst of the officers, who gathered around them.

"I am setting off," said Napoleon, in a loud voice, "to put myself at the head of the army and give battle to our enemies. You know the dangers which threaten our country. But our courage can face them and overcome them. . . ."

In striking terms, he depicted the barbarian hordes who were defiling the soil of France, the sufferings of the peasant population. He called upon the whole nation to forget its discords and take up arms in defense of freedom.

Then his voice trembled and broke under stress of the emotion which he could not conceal.

"I am your chosen leader. You have made me what I am. It is your duty to defend me. . . ."

He pushed Marie Louise and the King of Rome in front of him.

"I leave in your guard what is dearest to me, after France: my wife and my son. I entrust them to you. I entrust them to the affection of my faithful city of Paris. . . . You will answer to me for them, will you not? You will defend them? . . ."

Napoleon stopped, flung his arms out and his head back, and gazed at the six hundred men who were hanging on his words as though he would search their very souls.

"You will defend them, will you not?" he repeated. "You will defend them? . . ."

It was as though an electric current had run through the crowd of officers. A shout rolled through the hall like a thunder-clap:

"Long live the Emperor."

A forest of arms went up in the air.

"We swear it! We swear it!"

Marie Louise reeled with emotion. Napoleon caught her in his arms. Then he handed her over to her women, took the little King in his arms, and passed in front of his officers, who cheered him. He went out into the place du Carrousel, where the battalions of the National Guard were massed. They shouted with enthusiasm. Napoleon walked down their ranks, showing them the boy, raising him in the air, and stopping to kiss him every few yards.

Napoleon was radiant with delight. Once more, in the cheers that burst out in his presence, he culled the heart of Paris. He was intoxicated with happiness, pride and confidence.

"And now," he said to himself, "I am sure of it, I shall win!"

The next day, the last day, had come. Napoleon gave his final instructions to his brother, to Champagny, the secretary to the Regency, and to Méneval, his own secretary, whom he had put at Marie Louise's disposal.

"Keep up the Empress's spirits. Spare her anxiety. If there is bad news, break it to her gently."

All the afternoon of January 24th Napoleon spent shut up in his study with the King of Rome. For these few hours, he wanted to have his son all to himself. The boy never left his arms.

For the last time, Napoleon studied a maneuver on the carpet with his mahogany pieces.... Here was Blücher, there was Schwarzenberg.... In the center, Socken's and York's army corps.... Holding his chin in his hands, Napoleon reflected. Should he outflank the enemy on the left or on the right, or should he break through their center?

Suddenly the boy thrust out his hand and moved some of the pieces. Then he pulled his hand back and looked

at his father anxiously. Was he going to get a scolding? But the Emperor embraced him.

"Hurrah!" he cried. "Victory at last! That's the way to win it. So you're giving me lessons, are you, you young rascal? . . ."

He played with the boy, rolling him on the floor. He told him stories. He jumped him up and down on his knees.

"Come on," he said, "let's fight Papa Francis!"

The boy clapped his hands, laughing till the tears came into his eyes.

At length it was the King of Rome's bedtime. Napoleon dined with Marie Louise and Hortense. Then he took them into his study. The two women sat down on either side of the fireplace, in which a big fire was blazing. Napoleon walked about the room, opening drawers, sorting papers, tearing some up and throwing the pieces into the fire. As the flames leaped up, they illuminated the depressed faces of Marie Louise and Hortense, sitting silently with their hands in their laps.

As he passed them, Napoleon kissed his wife and patted Hortense on the cheek.

"Come, come!" he exclaimed. "Don't be so sad! Trust me! Don't I know my job any more? . . ."

"Of course," they replied.

The hours went by. . . . Midnight. . . . Two o'clock. . . . Several times a footman brought new candles and flung fresh fuel on the fire. . . . Finally the hour of separation came.

"You're going to be tired out again," murmured Marie Louise.

"I shall sleep in the carriage, as usual. I shall be at Châlons by this evening. . . ."

Napoleon took his wife in his arms and kissed her passionately. He tried to make a joke.

"Don't cry. I'm only going to beat Papa Francis again."

Marie Louise clung to him. Her eyes, as she raised them to him, were heavy with tears and anxiety.

"You'll come back soon?"

Napoleon did not answer. Some force within him seemed to forbid him to flaunt Fate.... At length, after a long silence, he said, in a grave tone of voice:

"That, *mio ben*, is God's secret...."

He handed the fainting Empress over to Madame de Montebello, and made his way to the King of Rome's apartments. His last visit was to his son.

He went into the boy's bedroom, where a night-light was burning. The little King lay in his cot. At his feet, the bronze eagle stood erect, with its eyes fixed on Napoleon's star, whose rays seemed to bless and protect the boy. He was fast asleep, with his fair curls tumbling on the pillow and making a luminous halo around his head.

Long, lovingly, Napoleon gazed at that dear face. Beneath his closed eyes, the boy's long lashes cast shadows on his round, rosy cheeks. The nostrils of his little tip-tilted nose quivered. In between his lips, creased by a dimple, gleamed a flash of his tiny teeth. Beneath his chin, his open nightshirt disclosed his throat, soft as silk, with life throbbing in it. Outside the sheets lay a plump arm, and at the end of it a little hand was like a flower with five delicate petals.

The Emperor could not tear himself away from gazing at the human being he loved best in the world.

"My son!" he murmured. "My little son!"

From the sight of him Napoleon drew a supreme comfort. The picture of his son which he carried away with him would surely save him from disaster or death.

But he must be going. The yellow brougham which had carried him to the four corners of Europe had been waiting outside the palace for hours. The horses would be pawing the ground, and Bertrand, the Grand Marshal, would be getting impatient.

Napoleon bent over the cot. Softly he laid his lips on his son's brow, just below his hair. Disturbed, the boy turned over. Then sleep flowed over him again, like a pure stream barely murmuring.

The Emperor straightened himself. He made his way to the door. On the threshold, he turned back for a last look at that fair, innocent, sleeping head, for which so many men were to die.

It was over. Napoleon plunged into the night. Behind him, an invisible hand drew a curtain of fire which was to separate living souls for ever.

He was never to see his wife or his son again.

CHAPTER XXI

TEN TO ONE

WITHIN three days after the Emperor left Paris, news of victory arrived. On January 27th he dislodged Blücher from Saint-Dizier, and the next day but one he defeated him at Brienne. More successes followed. Napoleon routed Blücher again at Champaubert. He crushed Stocken and York at Montmirail and Château-Thierry. Schwarzenberg, in his turn, was cut to pieces at Mormans, Nangis and Montereau, and driven back on Troyes.

Napoleon had given himself a breathing spell. He could take heart again. Schwarzenberg asked for an armistice.

"The wretches fall on their knees at the first defeat," cried the Emperor.

He felt himself the stronger. Now the rôles were reversed. It was he who would soon be able to dictate his terms to his enemies. He even felt in a position to make a final effort to detach Austria from the hostile coalition.

On February 17th, he received from Marie Louise a bonbon-box on which Mademoiselle Thibault had painted a portrait of the King of Rome. The boy was represented on his knees, saying his prayers.

"I want you to get this portrait engraved," Napoleon wrote to his wife, "with this device: 'I pray God to save my father and France.' "

The engraving was given away in all directions. Napo-

leon himself sent several copies of it to his father-in-law, in the hope of softening him. But the son-in-law was cherishing an illusion if he counted on Papa Francis's family feeling.

In fact, on March 1st, at Chaumont, England, Prussia and Russia signed a treaty binding themselves not to lay down their arms until France was reduced to her former frontiers.

Now that he knew where he stood, Napoleon conceived a daring plan. Augereau's army, which was at Lyons, would ascend the Saône and establish itself in the Vosges. Napoleon himself would fall upon the enemy's rear and join hands with Augereau. With the help of the garrisons in the east, which would sally from their besieged fortresses, they would then cut the Allies' communications and crush them in the plains of Champagne.

Everywhere Napoleon went the people plucked up courage. As soon as he appeared, his presence galvanized their hearts. The peasants, enraged at the outrages committed by the Cossacks, hastened to dig up the weapons they had buried.

For a moment the Allies faltered. Napoleon inspired them with something like terror. What could they do against this devil of a man who was everywhere at once and routed the strongest armies in the world with a handful of conscripts?

But the Emperor had no time to lose. He pursued Blücher, who had pulled his army together again. The Prussian army beat a retreat northwards, in order to effect a junction with Bernadotte's Swedes and Wintzingerode's Russians, who were coming up in support of it.

Napoleon reckoned that he would be able to annihilate the Prussians under the walls of Soissons, if the garrison held out. But meanwhile Soissons surrendered. No matter!

Napoleon continued his pursuit of Blücher. He captured Rheims, crossed the Aisne, and, on March 7th, at Craonne, gained a victory over the Russians and the Prussians.

But then he learned that Schwarzenberg, who had reëinforcements, was again advancing on Paris and had reached Nogent. Napoleon must hasten to protect Paris. In addition he had an opportunity, too good to miss, of falling on the rear of the Austrians and wreaking havoc upon them. So he swung round like a wild beast and made a dash for them. He passed through Rheims again, then Epernay, and so across Champagne.

At the news of Napoleon's threat to their rear, the Austrians fell back hastily on Troyes. On March 20th, at Arcis-sur-Aube, the little French army and the formidable Austrian army found themselves face to face: twenty-five thousand men against one hundred thousand. Napoleon knew that here he was going to play a decisive game.

Battle was joined. Followed by his escort, Napoleon spurred into the forefront. For a few moments, he was caught in a flurry, with Cossacks and hussars sabering at one another. He got out of it by the skin of his teeth.

Ceaselessly the enemy's squadrons returned to the charge.

"Is there no end to them?" murmured Napoleon.

Since he could not conquer, let him die! His death would at least be an advantage to the little King. The moment had come for him to sacrifice himself and so make sure of the throne for his son.

A shell fell close to him. Napoleon spurred his horse toward it. His regiments shouted in alarm. Exelmans was on the point of darting after his master; but Sebastiani held him back.

"Leave him alone!" he said. "Can't you see he's doing it on purpose? He wants to make an end."

The shell burst, the smoke cleared, and Napoleon ap-

peared, alive, on his feet, with his horse wounded beside him. Well, he had done his best. Death would have none of him.

But the French army was falling back under weight of superior numbers.

"They are too many for us," murmured Napoleon.

Depression seized upon him. This war was like the rock of Sisyphus; and he alone had to bear the burden of it. Augereau had gone to sleep at Lyons. Murat was betraying him. His wearied generals were making mistakes; and he could not repair all of them.

"I am no longer obeyed," he said to himself. "I need to be everywhere at once."

Only his step-son Eugène remained faithful to him. In Italy, Eugène was holding the Austrians on the Taro and the Neapolitans on the Mincio.

But Napoleon had made up his mind to fight to his last breath. He gathered his little army together and fell back towards Vitry-le-François, hoping to draw the enemy after him and keep them away from Paris. But his General Staff had lost confidence.

"Where are we going? What is to become of us?" his generals asked one another anxiously.

Blücher and Schwarzenberg had effected a junction between Châlons and Arcis. Never since the days of the Huns had the vast plain of Champagne seen so many soldiers. But the Allies hesitated. Should they advance straight against Napoleon, or should they march upon the capital?

Talleyrand, who was working on their side, helped them out of their dilemma. Let them come to Paris! They would be warmly welcomed. So, on March 23rd, the mass of the enemy swept like a great flood into the basin of the Ile-de-France.

Napoleon heard the news of the Allies' decision at Saint-Dizier. At the same time he learned that Marmont and Mortier, who were covering Paris with absurdly small forces, had been crushed at La Fère-Champenoise and Sézanne. The road to Paris lay open before the Allies.

At first the Emperor was inclined to congratulate himself. Let the enemy enter Paris! They would find their graves there. But around him his entourage grew uneasy. He was besieged with questions. Surely he would not sacrifice Paris? Everybody trembled for his family, his property, his interests. Abruptly the Emperor changed his mind. So be it: he would hasten to save Paris.

Would he be in time? Paris might hold out for a few days; but he must make haste.

On March 28th, Napoleon left Saint-Dizier. On the 29th, at Daulencourt bridge, he heard that the road to Troyes was clear. At once he dispatched General Dejean to inform the people of Paris that he was on his way back. That night he reached Troyes. After a few hours' rest, he set off again. On the way, he learnt that Meaux was in the enemy's hands. At the next halt, he heard that the Empress and the King of Rome had left Paris. The enemy were now at the gates of the capital.

There was not a moment to lose. On March 30th, at Villeneuve-sur-Vanne, Napoleon abandoned his escort and, with Caulaincourt, got into a fast gig. Drouot and Flahaut followed in another gig. The horses ate up the road.

Withdrawn into himself, Napoleon brooded over plans of defense and attack. The Allies by no means held victory in their hands yet.

It was ten o'clock at night. At an inn called "The Court of France," five leagues from Paris, the vehicles stopped to change horses. A group of horsemen emerged out of the darkness, riding hard.

"Halt!" shouted the Emperor.

The leader of the detachment came forward. He was General Belliard. Napoleon greeted him.

"What are you doing here? Where are the enemy? Where is the army? Who is defending Paris?"

Belliard's reply dumbfounded him. Paris was about to surrender.

"Surrender?" stormed Napoleon, half-speechless with dismay and rage. "But what has happened to my soldiers? What has happened to my cannon? What is Joseph doing? What is Clarke doing? And where are the Empress and the King of Rome?"

At length Belliard managed to make himself heard. In broken sentences he gave details of the disaster.

Marmont and Mortier had been able to rally from their rout only a handful of soldiers. The people of Paris had become demoralized. They believed that the Emperor was abandoning them to their fate. The Empress's departure had deepened their depression.

When the enemy came in sight, the wealthy and middle classes had thought only about surrender. But the lower classes had rebelled. The workmen had demanded arms and joined the National Guard. A few thousand men had advanced to meet the enemy. The village of Pantin was lost and won back. But the enemy's pincers closed in. They occupied Père-Lachaise, Menilmontant, and the Buttes-Chaumont one after the other.

Then Joseph gave Marmont authority to surrender. At five o'clock, hostilities were suspended, and the General Staffs on either side met to arrange the handing-over of the city. It was at this moment that Belliard left Paris....

Napoleon listened to his story with somber eyes, bathed in a cold sweat. His legs gave way under him, and he sat down at the roadside, with his head in his hands.

All at once, he stood up again. He hurried his suite into the inn. He unfolded a map, and ran his keen eyes over it. Then, after a long silence, he exclaimed:

"Yes, I've got them! God has delivered them into my hands."

He turned to Caulaincourt, and took him by the lapel of his coat.

"Four days! I want four days, time for my army to arrive, and victory is mine! You will set off at once and get into touch with the Emperor Alexander. Parley with him. String the negotiations out. But get me those four days!"

Confidence had come back to him. His suite stared at one another in a daze. Where could he find strength to go on hoping? Had he gone mad?

Napoleon dragged his suite outside again. Walking up and down the road, he went on questioning Belliard.

"And what about Montmartre? How did it come about that Montmartre was taken without a shot being fired?"

"Montmartre, Sire, was lacking in artillery and ammunition...."

"And what about my brother? Where was my brother? Did you see him on the battlefield?"

Belliard waved his hand in a way that implied that the army had seen nothing of King Joseph on that disastrous day. Napoleon flew into a rage.

"In short, everybody seems to have lost his head. That's what comes of employing men with no common sense, no energy. And that fool Joseph imagined he was as fit to command an army as I am! And that idiot Clarke—he's no good for anything outside office routine! . . ."

He turned to Caulaincourt and the officers who accompanied him.

"You have heard what Belliard has said, gentlemen. Well, I must go to Paris. If I'm not on the spot, people

simply behave like fools. . . . Caulaincourt, order my carriage. . . ."

"But, Sire," objected Belliard, "by this time the surrender may be signed. Paris may be evacuated."

Napoleon refused to listen to him.

"I'm going to Paris. I'll order the bells to be rung. Everybody will take up arms."

Then Caulaincourt intervened.

"It would be madness, Sire. You would be putting your head into the wolf's mouth."

Caulaincourt pointed to the camp-fires of the hostile army, which lit up the hills along the right bank of the Seine like a conflagration.

Napoleon was shaken. He bowed his head.

"Very well," he said. "I'll wait. . . ."

Then he issued orders. Flahaut would carry instructions to Marmont to break off negotiations and continue the defense of Paris. Caulaincourt would get into touch with the Allied sovereigns, with full power to negotiate and conclude peace.

Flahaut set off at full speed on a trooper's horse. The Emperor went back to the inn, shut himself up in a bedroom, and bent over his maps.

From time to time, he raised his head and stared at the campfires across the river. Their light seemed to burn his eyes. He recalled the time when he had camped outside Vienna, outside Berlin, outside Moscow. . . . Now it was he who was suffering the affront of the enemy's presence. It was he who was beaten. His wounded pride hurt him like a festering sore. He banged his fist on the table.

"Four days! Let Heaven grant me four days—and they shall see! . . ."

At three o'clock in the morning, a messenger dispatched

by Caulaincourt arrived. The news he brought fell upon Napoleon like a blow from a sledge-hammer.

The terms of surrender had been signed during the night. The enemy would enter Paris in the morning.

Napoleon sat down, with his arms hanging lax. In his dismay, he searched in his mind for something to which to cling. . . . Paris, France. . . . For the time being, they had ceased to exist. . . . But there was his son. There was his wife, his dear Louise. He must comfort her.

He took a pen and a sheet of paper, and wrote:

"MY DEAR,

"I came here to defend Paris, but it was too late. The city surrendered during the night. I am assembling my army in the neighborhood of Fontainebleau. I am in good health. I suffer for you in what you must be suffering.

"NAP.

"The Court of France, March 31st, at three o'clock in the morning."

CHAPTER XXII

FALLING CROWN

FOR weeks before this, a shadow had seemed to hang over the Tuileries. Despite Napoleon's orders, the truth seeped into the palace, and Marie Louise began to get anxious.

The King of Rome lived through the same events with the apparent indifference of childhood. But his young eyes did not fail to note that something in his surroundings was changed.

Why did they put him into uniform every day? Why had he to attend reviews and be present at parades every afternoon? Why did people around him get into corners and cry one day, and laugh for no reason the next? . . .

The boy became nervous. He slept badly. One night, he tossed and cried in his sleep to such an extent that Madame Marchand, his nurse, had to wake him up and comfort him. The next day, his mother asked him what had been wrong with him. All he would say was this:

"I dreamed about my dear Papa. . . ."

It was on the night of March 20th, the night of that day when, at Arcis-sur-Aube, Napoleon had vainly sought death on the battlefield. The boy had celebrated his third birthday the day before.

On March 28th, a rumor circulated so persistently that it plunged alarm into all hearts. The enemy were within

five leagues of Paris. The hour had struck for the Government to come to a decision.

The Regency Council met at a quarter past eight in the evening in Napoleon's study. Marie Louise, the chief officers of State, the Ministers and the President of the Senate were present. All of them looked at one another. What were they to do? The question to be decided was whether the Empress and the King of Rome should leave Paris or stay there.

Clarke, the Minister for War, spoke first. He set forth the situation. The city was not fortified, and it was impossible to defend it. In any case, there were not enough soldiers.

"How many are there?" asked Talleyrand, in his deep, sonorous voice.

"Barely 40,000—and the Russians and the Prussians are over 100,000."

Clarke gave it as his opinion that the Empress and the King of Rome should leave Paris at once. Argument ensued. Champagny and Savary, supported by Cambacérès and Talleyrand, maintained that it would be a great mistake for the Empress to abandon Paris. It would demoralize the people and make them ready to accept defeat. The Empress, as Regent, should be the heart and soul of the defense.

Then Boulay de la Meurthe spoke. He addressed himself to Marie Louise.

"Madame, remember your august great-grandmother, Maria Theresa. Follow her example. Show yourself to the people of Paris, with the King of Rome in your arms. Then victory will return to us."

Marie Louise, with burning ears and tearful eyes, hung her head and made no reply. She was ready to do whatever they decided. A vote was taken, and the Council, with

the exception of Clarke and Joseph, who abstained from voting, decided that the Regent should stay in Paris.

Then Joseph pulled some papers out of his pocket and addressed the Council.

"I have here, gentlemen, two letters from the Emperor which clearly decide the question with which we are concerned. The first is dated February 8th, and the second March 16th, only twelve days ago. Both of them prescribe the Empress's departure."

Joseph proceeded to read extracts from Napoleon's two letters. They were in the nature of his last will and testament, and they contained some prophetic passages.

> "If we should lose a battle and I should be killed, you will get the news before my Ministers. Get the Empress and the King of Rome to leave for Rambouillet. Order the Senate, the Council of State, and all the troops to assemble on the Loire....
>
> "Whatever happens, never let the Empress and the King of Rome fall into the enemy's hands. For my part, I would sooner see my son strangled than brought up in Vienna as an Austrian prince; and I have a good enough opinion of the Empress to be equally convinced that she is of the same opinion, so far as a wife and a mother can be....
>
> "... Stay with my son, and remember that I would rather see him in the Seine than in the hands of the enemies of France."

The Council listened with a sigh of relief. At once they were relieved of a crushing burden of responsibility. They voted once more, and this time it was decided that the Empress should leave for Rambouillet. Napoleon's orders, even when they were given at a distance, were not open to argument.

It was one o'clock in the morning when the Council

broke up. Even at this late hour, Joseph and Cambacérès returned to the charge with Marie Louise. Had she really thought things over? What she was about to do might have disastrous results. It was for her to decide.

Hortense added her warning to that of the two men.

"My sister," she said, "at least you must be aware that by leaving Paris you will be stultifying the defense of it, and you will thus lose your crown. You seem to me to be quite resigned to sacrificing it."

The Empress, with her Habsburg lip more prominent than ever in her swollen face, replied gently:

"You are quite right. But it is not my fault. The Council has decided that I should go."

Nothing was to be got out of her but that passive obedience which she derived from her childhood. She promptly went to bed, while people busied themselves packing in the palace, which hummed all night long like a factory.

At seven o'clock on the morning of March 29th, Marie Louise was up and ready to leave. Joseph sent word to her to wait a little. He was going to La Villette, and would send news from there. If she did not hear from him, she should leave the Tuileries at nine o'clock.

Marie Louise waited in her apartments with her ladies and the King of Rome. All this bustle delighted him. The ladies, having nothing else to do, played with him and made him laugh. His childish laughter rang strangely in that atmosphere of anxiety which hourly became heavier.

Nevertheless, the Empress had had a good breakfast, for nothing ever affected her appetite. Now she could ill conceal her impatience. Clad in a brown riding habit and a traveling cloak, she walked up and down the room. Sometimes she went to a window and looked out. But what was there to see? Ah, if only Napoleon would suddenly make his appearance, or send her orders not to leave Paris!

Time passed. At nine o'clock there was no word from Joseph. Marie Louise sent to the Ministry of War for news. Though it led her to expect the worst, she decided to wait a little longer.

She was not yet at the end of her troubles. A deputation from the National Guard came and begged her not to leave Paris. Then Jerome arrived, and, in his turn, told her to stay. Marie Louise lost her head. She wept and wrung her hands, flung her hat on her bed, and sank into an arm-chair.

"For God's sake, let them make up their minds and put me out of my misery!"

Then she sent Caffarelli to see Clarke. This time his response was definite. If the Empress did *not* leave at once, the Minister for War could take no responsibility for the consequences. In a few hours the Cossacks would have cut the roads.

"We must go," said Marie Louise, with a sigh.

Everybody started hurrying out to the carriages. But, amid general astonishment, the King of Rome refused to go.

Some inner instinct seemed to warn him that these grown-ups who were taking him away were going to make him unhappy. His little soul, that emanation of his father's soul, urged him strongly that they were making a mistake, and that, if Napoleon were there, he would denounce such desertion.

He screamed, he stamped his foot, he held on to curtains and doorways.

"Don't let's go to Rambouillet!" he cried. "It's a beast of a château! Let's stay here!"

Madame de Montesquiou and Madame Soufflot in turn took him in their arms and tried to calm him down.

"We'll come back," his governess told him, "we'll soon come back."

But the little King would not listen to them. He clutched the balustrade of the staircase and held on to it, with his little fingers riveted to the ironwork.

"I don't want to leave home. I don't want to go away. Now that Papa is away, I'm the master here. . . ."

He fought so hard that Monsieur Canisy, his squire, had to carry him by force to his mother's carriage.

Slowly the long procession got under way: ten berlins, baggage wagons, the coronation coach with a cover over it, and a mounted escort of twelve hundred men.

A crowd had gathered. In silence, with their hearts full of resentment, they watched their master's wife, who should have defended them, take to flight and abandon them to the enemy.

CHAPTER XXIII

AN ATTEMPT AT SUICIDE

MARIE LOUISE took refuge at Blois. Once there, she did not seem to realize the gravity of what was happening. She lived in the hope that her father would intervene in her favor and that everything would be settled. Her health—for she imagined herself to be ill—concerned her more than the affairs of the Empire.

One morning Saint-Aulaire, the Emperor's chamberlain, arrived. He announced himself as the bearer of news of extreme importance, and was at once ushered in to see the Empress. She was still in bed, with one foot sticking out from the bedclothes.

Saint-Aulaire informed her that the Senate had decreed the Emperor's deposition. He expected to hear sobs and cries of despair. To avoid witnessing the Empress's distress, he lowered his eyes.

Then he heard Marie Louise saying to him, quite calmly:

"Oh, you're looking at my foot, are you? I've always been told it's very pretty."

It was not until April 7th that the Empress became disturbed. In the morning of that day, Colonel Galbois, sent by the Emperor, informed her that Napoleon had abdicated.

"Oh no," she cried, "it's not possible! My father won't allow it. He himself put me on the throne, and he's told

me over and over again that he'd keep me on it. . . . In any case, here is a proclamation which I am addressing to the people of France. I put my son under the protection of the nation."

She went on to tell Galbois that she wanted to join the Emperor at Fontainebleau. When the colonel represented to her that the journey might be dangerous, she cried:

"Why should it be dangerous? You've made it yourself, haven't you? The Emperor must be very unhappy now, and it is my duty to be with him. I want to join him. I shall be all right anywhere, so long as I am with him."

But Galbois insisted that she should stay at Blois. Marie Louise gave way. Then she wrote two letters: one to her husband assuring him of her affection; and the other to her father, once more asking him for his help and protection.

The next day, however, she changed her mind and made ready to leave. Madame de Montesquiou and Madame de Luçay encouraged her to do so. A carriage was already waiting at the foot of the backstairs when Madame de Montebello arrived. She was highly indignant.

What was the Empress thinking about? How could she dream of taking a rash step which would link her fortunes with those of the Bonapartes, just when they were about to be put under the ban of Europe?

Before all else, should she not make sure of an advantageous settlement for the King of Rome? Only the Allies could make such a settlement for him. The last thing Marie Louise should do was appear to be running away from them.

The cleverness of these arguments shook Marie Louise. Her indolence, her horror of making an effort, her concern for her health did the rest. She decided to stay.

Madame de Montebello had had a scare. In case Marie Louise should suddenly change her mind again, she immediately dispatched her friend, the Baron de Saint-Aignan, to see Schwarzenberg.

Even then Marie Louise was not at the end of her troubles. On April 8th, Jerome and Louis Bonaparte arrived. They wanted her to come with them and join the army and the government on the other side of the Loire. Marie Louise refused. Jerome and Louis were insistent. They shouted at her, and lost their tempers to such an extent that she was afraid of being carried off by force and summoned her servants to protect her.

She felt helpless. To be sure, she still talked about going to Fontainebleau, despite the spitting of blood which worried her. But, even if she was sincere in this intention, she had no time to carry it out.

Schwarzenberg had lost no time. During the afternoon of April 8th, Count Schouvalov arrived at Blois. As commissioner for the Allied Powers, he was instructed to escort the Empress and the King of Rome to Orléans.

There was nothing for Marie Louise to do but obey. Her Court dispersed. Officials, ladies of the palace, chamberlains all went their several ways, endowed with handsome gifts.

Then Marie Louise said good-by to Madame Laetitia, her mother-in-law.

"I hope, Madame," she said, "that you will retain the feelings of goodwill towards me with which you have hitherto honored me."

Madame Mère looked at her coldly. Her grave tone betrayed her secret resentment against Marie Louise because, at this critical hour, she had so poorly supported the fortunes of the Bonapartes.

"Madame," replied Madame Laetitia, "that depends on yourself and your future conduct...."

On April 9th, at ten o'clock in the morning, the Empress set off for Orléans under Count Schouvalov's escort. She carried with her all her finery and the Crown diamonds. Ménéval took over her functions as Regent. At Beaugency there was an alarm. Cossacks fell upon the procession and pillaged a few carriages. At six o'clock in the evening, the procession was lodged in the bishop's palace.

She was now nearer to Napoleon, and she had not abandoned all idea of joining him. But, even if she wanted to do so, it was henceforth impossible. Orders were about to be issued that the Empress was to be prevented *by all necessary means* from proceeding to Fontainebleau.

Napoleon alternated between hope and despair. Sometimes he contemplated death, but still he clung to life.

He made plans for the future. For himself, he would be content with the island of Elba; but he demanded Tuscany for his wife and his son. He was equally concerned about assuring the future of Eugène, his mother, his brothers and his sisters. He wanted to put everybody he loved, everybody who had served him well, beyond the reach of want.

He arranged his future life. He would live with Marie Louise if she was good enough to join him. If not, he would make no attempt to compel her.

"Cæsar can turn back into a citizen," he said to Caulaincourt, "but it is harder for his wife to stop being Cæsar's wife."

Every day Napoleon received news of his little King of Rome.

To the boy, all his successive changes of residence were simply so many recreations. Clad in a soft blue sailor suit and a black velvet cap, he played innocently in the court-

yard of the bishop's palace at Orléans. His pages planted posts in it to represent soldiers, and he reviewed them, with a wooden sword in his hand.

"Blücher is my worst enemy," he said, clenching his little fists. "And that wicked old King has taken my father's place and all my toys. But he'll have to give them back to us."

How impatient Napoleon was to see his dear little boy again! But one consideration still held him back. Would the climate of Elba suit his wife and his son?

In all her letters, Marie Louise complained about her health. She had pains in her chest, and she spat blood. The Emperor asked Corvisart, in whom he had every confidence, for his opinion.

But the doctor betrayed his master. His report was inspired by Madame de Montebello, who pulled all the strings in this hellish plot, and it was drafted before her eyes.

Corvisart was quite definite. Neither the Empress nor the King of Rome could live in Elba. It might later be possible for Marie Louise to do so; but she must first make a long stay at Aix and take the waters there.

Napoleon was astonished. He pleaded the mildness of the Mediterranean climate. But Corvisart replied definitely:

"Aix will be the Empress's salvation. Elba means death for both mother and son."

The Emperor bowed to this verdict. But one hope was still left to him. When he set out for Elba, he could go a large part of the way with his wife and his son. He wrote to Marie Louise to arrange this. Then, to make sure that nobody should thwart his plan, he sent General Cambronne to Orléans at the head of a detachment of the National Guard, with orders to bring the Empress and the King of Rome to Fontainebleau.

But alas, when Cambronne reached Orléans on April 13th, he found the nest empty and the birds flown....

Almost every day Marie Louise had received a letter from Napoleon. He wrote in a moving, simple strain. Out of the ruins of his great dream he exerted himself to rebuild a little happiness for the future.

"MY DEAREST DEAR,

"Your troubles are much in my heart. They are the only troubles which I cannot bear. So try to rise above adversity.

"Later today I shall send you the arrangements that have been made. I am being given the island of Elba, and you and your son are being given Parma, Piacenza and Guastalla. So at least you will have a house and a fine country to live in when you are tired of staying in my island of Elba and get bored with me, as you are bound to do when I am older, while you are still young.

"As soon as everything is settled, I shall go to Briard. You can meet me there, and then we shall go by way of Moulin and Chambéry to Parma, and thence to Spezia to embark.

"I am in good health, and my courage is equal to anything, above all if you can reconcile yourself to my misfortune and if you think you can still find happiness in it.

"Good-by, my dear. I think of you, and your troubles mean much to me. All yours.

"NAP."

"Fontainebleau, April 11th, at nine o'clock in the morning."

Marie Louise received this letter during the morning of April 12th. In the evening of the same day, Bausset brought her a second letter from Napoleon, in which he confirmed the first, and asked her whether the arrangement for them to travel together to Parma suited her.

But Bausset was also the bearer of another letter, written by Metternich, who had arrived in Paris the day before. In this letter the Chancellor sang a siren's song.

The Allies proposed to endow the ex-Empress with an independent income, which would pass to her son. But it would be better if, as the Emperor Francis himself wished, she should first proceed to Austria with the King of Rome. In any case, let her be reassured. She might have an easy mind both about the present and about the future.

Hard on the heels of this letter arrived Prince Paul Esterhazy and Prince Lichtenstein. They were instructed to escort Marie Louise to Rambouillet, where, so they said, her father awaited her. They assured her that Napoleon gave his consent to this journey.

How could she resist such promises? On the night of April 12th, she let them take her and the King of Rome to Rambouillet.

The Austrian Eagle had fastened its claws upon the French Eaglet. It was never to let him go again.

Even before Cambronne's return, Napoleon knew what had happened. A letter from Ménéval had informed him.

So what he had dreaded so much had come to pass. He had been robbed of his son. He remembered what he had written to his brother Joseph on February 8th:

> "I would sooner see my son strangled than brought up in Vienna as an Austrian prince. . . ."

Napoleon was now more or less a prisoner at Fontainebleau. Every exit was under guard. He was all alone. Nobody came to see him, and every day brought fresh desertions among those around him. Everybody found some pretext for going away. One man's wife was ill. Another had

urgent business in Paris. A third was called away by a sudden death in his family. Napoleon made no effort to keep anybody. He amused himself by reading the papers, which loaded him with insults.

The night after the news from Blois had reached him, Napoleon went to bed at ten o'clock. He seemed quite calm, and nobody noticed any change in his habits. At midnight he got up and summoned his valet.

"Hubert," he said, "light the fire."

In his nightshirt, Napoleon helped to get the fire going. When it was burning briskly, he said:

"Hubert, bring me writing material, and then go to bed."

His valet did as he was told and left the room. Napoleon donned a dressing-gown and walked up and down. Hubert had left the door ajar. He watched Napoleon walking about, sitting down, writing, tearing up papers. Then he stood up, and walked about again, this time more quickly. Uneasy about his unusual agitation, Hubert went on watching him with growing anxiety.

Napoleon came to a standstill, as though on the brink of a precipice down which he must throw himself. Darkness and disaster hemmed him in on all sides. He had reached the depths of misfortune, and thence he could measure the immensity of human cowardice and human cruelty. He passed his hand across his brow, on which his curling lock was damp with cold sweat.

"My son, my son!" he murmured. "What have I left to live for now?"

He made his way to the dressing-case which stood open on his bedside table. His movements were hurried. He was impatient to be done with it. He took out a little black taffeta sachet in the shape of a heart.

"Here is deliverance," he said to himself.

It was the sachet which he hung round his neck every morning. It contained a poison prepared by Yvan in accordance with Cabanis's formula: the same poison with which Condorcet had done himself to death to escape the guillotine.

Napoleon split the sachet open, and emptied its contents into a glass containing a little water and sugar. He stirred it with a spoon. Without hesitation, he swallowed the mixture. Then he went and lay down at full length, closed his eyes, and awaited death.

Hubert had followed what he was doing, fearing that he understood it only too well. He went on watching, with dread in his heart. Several minutes went by. All at once, Hubert heard groans and moans. He rushed into the room.

Napoleon lay on his back, with his nightshirt open. There was a little foam at the corners of his mouth, his eyes were turned up, and he was clawing at his chest.

The startled valet rushed out into the passage.

"Help! The Emperor is dying!"

Candles were lit in all directions. A mad rush shook the palace. Yvan the surgeon, Grand Marshal Bertrand and Caulaincourt reached Napoleon's room. Yvan tore his hair.

"Woe is me!" he cried. "Everybody will think I poisoned him."

He rushed out of the room, out of the palace, like a madman. A horse was tethered to the railings. Yvan untethered it, leapt into the saddle, and fled for Paris at a gallop.

That very morning, Napoleon had given him 200,000 francs, a pension of 40,000 francs, and the cross of the Legion of Honor.

In the bedroom, they were busy around Napoleon. In between hiccups, he besought them:

"Let me die! Have pity on me! Let me die!"

He seized Caulaincourt's hand.

"My dear friend, look after my wife and my son!"

Cadet, the chemist, had been hastily summoned. He forced Napoleon to swallow several cups of hot tea. Finally he was able to vomit, and he became bathed in sweat. It was a healthy reaction. He became drowsy, and went to sleep for several hours.

When Napoleon awakened, he looked around him, astonished to find that he was still alive. So death itself had betrayed him?

"Ah," he said, "it was not God's will. . . ."

Thus he accepted life again.

CHAPTER XXIV

AT RAMBOUILLET

"WHERE is my father?" asked Marie Louise, when she arrived at Rambouillet at noon on April 13th.

She was told that the Austrian Emperor had not yet arrived. Marie Louise was astonished. Little by little, it dawned on her that she had been fooled. She had to wait three endless days before the Emperor Francis arrived. She spent them weeping and lamenting.

Her entourage took advantage of this interval to round off the task to which they had set their hands. Madame de Montebello exerted herself to paint Marie Louise's fresh future in the most glowing colors. She would be wealthy, she would be independent, she would be sovereign of a State in which all the arts flourished. Why should she worry about her husband, whom all Europe treated as an outlaw?

But Marie Louise was a wife who still held by the husband who had taught her how to love.

"What can you expect?" she asked. "I love him, and he needs me.... Besides, he loves me too."

Madame de Montebello looked at her pityingly.

"He may have made you think so," she sighed. "But, believe me, he never loved you."

Marie Louise felt that these words were akin to blas-

phemy. All of her rebelled against them: her whole body, her whole soul.

"Oh, I could never believe that! . . ."

"If he had really loved you, Madame," said Madame de Montebello, sharply, "he would have been faithful to you. . . ."

Marie Louise was indignant.

"What? Do you mean to say that he? . . . Oh, it's not true!"

The moment had come for Madame de Montebello to stage the little comedy which she had rehearsed with Madame de Brignole and Talleyrand.

"Roustan and Constant are here, Madame," she said. "You can ask them. They are well informed, if anybody is. Shall I send for them?"

Madame de Brignole had taken steps to summon Roustan, the Mameluke, and Constant, the valet, to Rambouillet. They, too, had abandoned their master.

The temptation was too strong for Marie Louise.

"Very well," she said, "send for them."

Napoleon's two servants were ushered in. Madame de Montebello requested them to tell, in the Empress's presence, what they knew about the Emperor's amorous escapades. The fellows had had their palms well greased, and they did not wait to be asked twice.

Roustan told how, during the past few months, he had often escorted the Emperor to Madame Walewska's at night. Moreover, during one of the Emperor's journeys in Normandy—at Caen, to be exact—a certain Madame de Pellapra had been most kind-hearted towards his master.

Marie Louise listened to him, white and shuddering. But she had heard far from all. Constant, questioned in his turn, answered as a well-drilled pupil should.

"Would you call the Emperor's escapades numerous?"

"No, I couldn't say that.... Still, there was one that was pretty serious.... A certain Mademoiselle Lise...."

Craftily, he piled on details calculated to rend a wife's heart.

"She lived at Bourg-la-Reine with her mother and her stepfather. Her mother was married for the second time to a major in the cavalry.... The girl was seventeen.... Many was the time that I smuggled her into Saint Cloud. We used to make our way in through the Orangery.... She was a very pretty girl, a brunette. Yes, quite dark. And she had very small hands and feet. A very graceful little thing, in short."

"That will do, that will do!" cried Marie Louise, putting her hands to her ears.

"And when did this happen, Constant? Do you remember?" Madame de Montebello prompted, perfidiously.

"Oh yes," replied the valet, in a casual tone of voice. "It was almost immediately after His Majesty's marriage."

Marie Louise fled, waiting to hear no more. Left alone, the actors looked at one another in triumph.

At length, on April 16th, the Austrian Emperor arrived from Burgundy, where he had taken refuge till Napoleon was safely out of the way.

In tears, Marie Louise thrust the King of Rome into his arms.

"Here is my son, Father. Protect him!"

The Emperor took the boy in his arms and kissed his daughter. He consoled her with words of hope, and tried to excuse himself.

"Really, I had nothing to do with your husband's fall. Ah, if only I had been in Paris! Things would have happened quite differently. Schwarzenberg misunderstood my orders. As luck would have it, I stayed behind at Chan-

ceaux. . . . But you needn't worry. Everything will be all right. First you must come and have a rest in Vienna. Then you can go and join your husband. Of course you can, whenever you like. For that matter, I'll write to him. I'll tell him so with my own hand."

He took the King of Rome on his knee, kissed him and caressed him, and did his best to smile.

"Really, that's a fine child of yours. I've rarely seen such a handsome child. . . . You needn't worry, I tell you. I'll be a father to him. He can count on me. . . . For that matter, he looks like all of us. He belongs to our family."

More or less reassured, Marie Louise smiled and relaxed. The little King, for his part, stared at the face of the old gentleman bending over him. That long, rubicund face, with its prominent eyes, embarrassed him in a way that made the blood curdle in his veins.

When he was back with Madame de Montesquiou, this was his comment on their first meeting:

"Madame Quiou, I've seen Grandfather. I don't like the looks of him."

It was decided that Marie Louise and her son should set off for Vienna. Hastily baggage was made ready, packing cases were nailed up.

The little King wandered about bewildered in the midst of all this confusion. He attended the packing of his cot and his toys: his crystal watering-cart, his miniature billiard-table, his musical grenadier. He was pale and had a cough, for he had caught cold.

Marie Louise, for her part, was in still worse shape. But still she had to endure humiliating visits, first from the Emperor of Russia and then from the King of Prussia, who came to lay their compliments at her feet.

The household of the Eaglet had been winnowed by dis-

aster. Only four of its members agreed to accompany him to Vienna: Madame de Montesquiou, staunch to her vow and resolved to carry on her task to the end; Madame Soufflot, a "red" woman, who was promoted to be under-governess; her daughter Fanny, aged fifteen; and Madame Marchand, one of the nurses, over whom the boy played the tyrant a bit.

By way of Grosbois, Troyes and Dijon, the procession made its way east. It carried away from France a lamenting Empress, who wept by day, could not sleep at night, was a prey to remorse, and bitterly regretted that she had not joined her husband.

The little King, who traveled in his carriage with his governesses, was at first amused by the novel sights which presented themselves to him every day. But the length of the journey finally made this entertainment monotonous. He got bored, and longed for his usual playmates.

"Ah," he said, "it's easy to see that I'm not a King now. I haven't got any pages any more."

Another time, he sighed and asked Madame de Montesquiou:

"Why won't they let me go and kiss my Papa any more?"

On April 30th, at Basle, he crossed the frontier of the Empire which, for the past fifteen years, his father had built up for him with human flesh and blood. Now it was rotting like a corpse.

PART THE SECOND

CHAPTER XXV

AT SCHÖNBRUNN

Marie Louise left Basle with her son on May 4th. Accompanied by Madame de Montebello, Madame de Brignole, Bausset, Corvisart, Ménéval and Caffarelli, she pursued her route by way of Zurich and Constance, where she went out on the lake.

On May 9th, her party entered the Tyrol, which was Austrian territory. Peasants came down from the mountains to hail their Emperor's daughter. At the entrance to every town, a crowd took her horses out of the carriage and drew her into the town amid a storm of cheers and flowers. It was the return of the prodigal daughter.

At Innsbruck there was a halt for forty-eight hours. In the palace where the Empress stayed hung a portrait representing Joseph II at the age of ten, with his mother, Maria Theresa. On the day of their arrival, Bausset, that cringing courtier, planted himself in front of the canvas.

"Oh," he exclaimed, "what a remarkable resemblance!"

The people present looked at one another in astonishment. The former prefect of the Palace proceeded to take the King of Rome in his arms, and lift him up level with the portrait of Joseph II.

"Aren't I right?" he asked. "Isn't it striking? His Highness is the living image of His Majesty."

Out of politeness, some of the company agreed with him. But Marie Louise cut them short in annoyance.

"I agree that he's got the Habsburg lip," she said, "but his features are his father's."

The journey was continued by easy stages. The party reached Enns on May 15th, and Moelk on May 20th. Two days later, four leagues outside Vienna, Marie Louise was welcomed by her step-mother, who had come to meet her. They embraced with tears in their eyes.

"God bless you, my dear Marie Louise!" exclaimed Maria Ludovica, who had cut capers when she heard of Napoleon's fall.

At six o'clock in the evening, the carriage in which Marie Louise, now known as the Duchess of Parma, and the Austrian Empress were seated drove into the park at Schönbrunn. The people of Vienna lined the route, blessing Providence that their Emperor's dear daughter had returned to her family safe and sound.

At the steps of the palace waited Marie Louise's brothers and uncles: a whole string of archdukes. The Duchess of Parma passed tearfully from the arms of one to the arms of another. At length she was able to escape from them, enter the palace, and make her way to her apartments, outside which her sisters were awaiting her. There were more embraces, more tears. Marie Louise's sisters stared at her fearfully and pawed at her, as though to assure themselves that she was really intact and that the Corsican ogre had not eaten bits out of her. Thank God, she was all there!

A little later, the little King's carriage arrived. The sight of him melted the hearts of the good people of Vienna.

"Long live the Prince of Parma! . . . Isn't he sweet? . . . Isn't he a darling? . . ."

The ladies of the Court thronged to kiss his hands. Though a little taken aback, the boy graciously suffered

them. But in the end their effusions annoyed him. All these strange, somewhat greedy faces which came close to him to kiss him made him uneasy. He took refuge with Madame de Montesquiou, and she carried him to his bedroom.

Outside the palace, the guards closed the gates of the park railings, beyond which the crowd went on manifesting their enthusiasm.

That night Metternich could sleep soundly. The Eaglet was well and truly caged.

At Schönbrunn Marie Louise led a very retired life. She had apartments on the first floor, which communicated through a dressing-room with those of her son. She still slept very badly and continued to regret the absence of Napoleon. She wrote to him regularly, and sighed whenever she glanced at a miniature of him which she wore at her wrist.

But, as time went on, she felt less unhappy. She took up painting and music again, and started brushing up her Italian, in order not to cut too poor a figure on the throne of Parma.

She still talked about joining Napoleon in Elba after she had taken her cure at Aix. But Maria Ludovica tried to dissuade her from going to the Savoy watering-place.

"Carlsbad is much better," she said, "and you could live in one of our castles in Bohemia. A cure at Carlsbad would do you much more good."

Almost all the rest of the family played the part of chorus to Maria Ludovica. But Marie Louise persisted in her intention. Moreover, she found an unexpected ally in her great-aunt, Marie Caroline of Naples.

This masterful woman, though she had betrayed her

husband abundantly in her youth, now bore belated witness to touching conjugal sentiment.

"God's life," she exclaimed, "I would never have let myself be separated from my husband like that! If I were in your place, my dear, do you know what I'd do?"

"No, great-aunt."

"Well, if I were your age, nothing would stop me, and nobody could prevent me from joining my husband. I'd be quick about it. One night, I'd disguise myself as a man, I'd make a rope out of my sheets, my bed-curtains, or anything else that would serve, and I'd be out of the window in a flash. Then they could run after me.... My daughter, when you marry, it is for life. So show a little boldness!"

Spellbound, Marie Louise listened to this fine lesson in energy; but she was not the kind of woman to put it into practice. For the time being, her whole object was to get to Aix. There she would find Corvisart and Madame de Montebello, who had gone on ahead of her. She had come to count on their company.

The Emperor Francis returned to Vienna on June 15th. His daughter at once asked him for his permission to pack her trunks. Urged by Metternich, the Emperor at first refused to let her go. Then he relented.

Marie Louise might go to Aix if she wished; but she must leave her son behind at Schönbrunn. Metternich knew that in the person of the Prince of Parma he held an invaluable hostage.

Marie Louise set off on July 1st, accompanied by a small suite, and traveling under the name of the Duchess of Colorno. She reached Geneva on July 10th.

Meanwhile, in Vienna, Metternich and the Emperor did not feel happy at the thought of her wandering about like this. After all, suppose she suddenly took it into her head

to go to Elba? They must guard against any such whim.

The Emperor had originally nominated Prince Nicholas Esterhazy to accompany Marie Louise and keep an eye on her. But he was old and timid. She needed a firmer mentor.

So the Emperor Francis wrote to Prince Schwarzenberg, asking him to suggest an officer who would be "fully competent to keep me informed, and in case of need, if my daughter gets into any trouble, come to her aid with good advice."

Schwarzenberg at once went to see Metternich, and the two of them made themselves accomplices in a conspiracy.

"I think I have the man we want," said the marshal.

"Who is he?"

"Count von Neipperg, in command of a cavalry division at Pavia."

The Chancellor reflected. Then, bent on probing his visitor's intentions, he asked:

"So you think he's the right man?"

"He's been fighting the French for nearly twenty years, and he hates Napoleon."

"I know," said Metternich. "It was thanks to him that Murat deserted Napoleon. He was at the back of Bernadotte's betrayal of him, and he all but corrupted Prince Eugène. He's a clever diplomat.... But he's got only one eye...."

"Quite so. He can't forgive the French for the sword-thrust that cost him his right eye. All the same, he's an accomplished man of the world, and his one eye is seductive enough for two...."

Schwarzenberg winked, and added:

"Few women can resist him."

The Chancellor looked at Schwarzenberg, and the two of them smiled. They understood one another....

CHAPTER XXVI

THE SEDUCER

After leaving Geneva, Marie Louise made excursions for a few days from Chamonix. On July 17th, she started for Aix, her destination.

At Carrouge, a little short of Aix, an officer of general's rank, wearing the uniform of the Hungarian hussars, suddenly made his appearance at the door of her carriage. He swept off his hat, and bowed to the ground.

"Count Adam Albert von Neipperg. . . ."

The duchess extended her hand. The officer took it, gracefully and respectfully, and inhaled the scent of it as though it were a rare flower.

"I think, Sir," said Marie Louise, languidly, "that we have met before."

Neipperg bowed again. He replied, in a mellow voice:

"In 1812, His Majesty the Emperor, your august father, did me the great honor of attaching me to Your Majesty's person as chamberlain. I was in Your Majesty's service at Dresden and Prague."

"Yes, I remember. . . ."

Marie Louise studied with something like disfavor this resplendent mentor whom her father had sent after her. To tell the truth, her first impression of the man, whom she knew to be a bitter enemy of France and Napoleon, was somewhat disagreeable.

She itemized his person. What struck her about him, first of all, was a broad black bandage which ran across his forehead and covered his right eye. But his other eye, which was black and keen, shone bright enough for two.

His frizzled flaxen hair was a bit thin. His naturally high complexion was made brick-color by open air life, with a leaden tinge derived from the trials of campaigning. He was of medium build and well made, he carried himself elegantly, and his movements were graceful. As for his age, he would be about forty.

Taken as a whole, was he plain or attractive? Marie Louise could not say. In any case, he was one of those men to whom a woman could not long remain indifferent.

"I shall see you again at Aix," she said, "and then I shall give you my instructions."

Neipperg bowed once more. Then he said, solemnly:

"Your Majesty may count absolutely upon my devotion and my discretion. I hope you will be pleased with the house which I have got ready for you in Aix."

He withdrew and mounted. As he rode beside the carriage, he summed up his own impressions thoughtfully.

"A little worn, the duchess. Blotchy complexion and flabby flesh—even though she's only twenty-three. . . . On the other hand, she's a duchess, and she's still called 'Your Majesty. . . .' And Parma is a very attractive place. One could lead a quiet life there. . . . Still, I expected better of her. . . . There's no denying that Napoleon uses up women just as he does armies."

When she arrived in Aix, Marie Louise had to admit that Neipperg had good taste. The house which he had chosen for her was a little way outside the town, on a hill. The view from it was charming, and extended over the lake of Le Bourget, meadow and forest, with the bare rock and glaciers of mountains in the background.

All at once, Marie Louise felt that she had come to life again. She clasped Madame de Montebello in her arms. Corvisart and Isabey were there too. She was more or less at home.

She felt still more at home when Ménéval set off for Paris on July 19th. He never said anything; but she could not stand the condemnatory way in which he looked at her.

She proceeded to amuse herself to the fullest extent. Life was one long round of excursions; rides on horseback, in a habit whose elegance excited remark; boating on the lake; and receptions which Talma, magnificently impassioned, graced with his presence.

Marie Louise soon stopped thinking much about the past. The island of Elba receded into a remote future over which hung a dark mist.

Still, she did not as yet erase Napoleon from her life. On July 31st, she dispatched Bausset to Parma to arrange for her arrival there. Bausset set off entrusted with a letter to Napoleon and a bust of the King of Rome which was to be sent to Elba.

When he heard about all this, Neipperg intervened, with all the skill of a diplomat used to twisting people round his finger.

So Marie Louise proposed to go to Parma? It would be a bad tactical mistake if she did. Was she not aware that the duchy of Parma was claimed by the ex-Queen of Etruria? Her departure for Italy would make a most unfortunate impression on the Allies.

"But didn't the treaty of April 11th definitely grant Parma to me?" Marie Louise objected.

Neipperg made a face. That treaty was a scrap of paper. Did not Marie Louise realize that, with the exception of the Emperor Alexander, she was not in favor with the Al-

lied Sovereigns? The question of the succession to the duchy of Parma was to be reopened at the Congress of Vienna, shortly to assemble. It was not to Parma that Marie Louise should go, but to Vienna, where she would be on the spot to defend her own interests and her son's. Let her make no mistake about it: she had a hard task before her. But Neipperg, for his part, was ready to help her with his advice. He would make all the necessary overtures, and put his experience and his influence, which was extensive and valuable, at her disposal.

As she listened to her future champion, Marie Louise felt shaken. How could she fail to be touched by his devotion to her, which had all the marks of being quite disinterested?

Craftily, Neipperg proceeded to approach a subject which gave full scope to his virtuosity.

Let Marie Louise cease to wear herself out with regrets which were harmful to her health. Napoleon represented the past. She had nothing to gain by looking back in that direction. Besides, was there not talk of sending Napoleon five hundred leagues away, to the Azores, or even further? It was about her son that Marie Louise should think. All her efforts as a mother should be directed toward securing his succession to the duchy of Parma.

Neipperg had plucked a string to which Marie Louise was responsive. He played on it like an artist.

Marie Louise agreed that he was right. She would go to Elba, of course—but not till later, much later.

Decidedly, Neipperg was a man whom she could not do without. Every day she found him on the job. She learnt to appreciate his capabilities.

Nothing flustered him: the choice of a costume, the adjustment of a ribbon, a change in style of hairdressing. He knew just the right moment to pay her, respectfully, an

appropriate compliment on the color of her eyes, the bloom of her complexion, the music of her laugh. He was a gay supper-partner, a tireless dancer, the heart and soul of an evening's amusement; and nobody could sigh more soulfully in the moonlight.

With him there was nothing to worry about. He arranged everything, foresaw everything, thought about everything. Marie Louise's life glided along as though she were in a boat on a calm lake with enchanted shores.

Had she a fancy for an air of Cimarosa's? Neipperg sang it with trills that caught at her heart-strings. A sonata? He sat down at the piano and played Mozart, Beethoven and Haydn from memory. His knowledge was encyclopaedic. He never talked about himself; but he could discourse with equal felicity about politics, war, music, painting, and the other arts, including that supreme art, the art of love.

Madame de Montebello, Isabey and Corvisart left Aix. Marie Louise was very much astonished to find that she did not miss them for very long. She still had Neipperg, and, with him, life remained rose-colored.

But the gay life she led created a scandal. In Paris, Talleyrand was so upset about it that he made representations to Vienna. On August 15th, Marie Louise received a letter from Metternich in which, by order of the Emperor, he requested her to return to Vienna without delay.

Without delay? That would be unseemly, said Neipperg. The Austrian capital was throbbing with the murmur of the festivities staged every day in honor of the coming congress. Marie Louise could not take part in that hubbub. Her position imposed reserve and discretion upon her.

Did she know Switzerland? No? Then let them go for a trip to the Bernese Oberland before returning to Vienna.

So they set off, with Neipperg daily murmuring his siren-song:

"Remember Parma! . . ."

Bausset had returned to Aix, but he was not in the way. They took him along with them. On September 10th they reached Fribourg, and on the 11th Berne.

There Marie Louise received bad news. Her great-aunt, Queen Caroline, was dead. She wept, but her tears were soon dried. Neipperg, among other things, knew how to console a woman. Indeed, he was a pastmaster at it.

Besides, a visitor turned up to distract Marie Louise from her loss. The Princess of Wales, who was on her way to Rome, begged to be allowed to present her respects. She was a woman of forty-six, extravagant in her behavior. Nevertheless, Marie Louise invited her to dinner.

The princess arrived clad in white muslin, crowned with diamonds and beplumed like a peacock. It was a gay meal. Then they went into the drawing-room. Neipperg sat down at the piano and played some Italian ariettas with his usual talent. Then the ladies expressed a desire to sing the duet from *Don Juan*. Neipperg accompanied them. The princess cooed:

> "To where our hands can meet
> Along these flowery paths let's go.
> Once there you will, my sweet,
> Give me your heart, I know."

Marie Louise caught Neipperg's eye as she went on:

> "I would indeed, did I but dare
> To let my mad heart have its way.
> For oh! it causes me such care.
> If this be love I cannot say."

Neipperg smilingly accepted these words as an avowal of love.

They resumed their excursions. They visited forests and glaciers, the Lake of the Four Cantons, the chapel of Küssnacht, erected at the spot where William Tell jumped out of Gessler's boat.

Marie Louise was enchanted. What a companion Neipperg was! He was always attentive, always cheerful, always good-humored. Nobody could go into greater ecstasies over the song of a bird, a flowery meadow, or the sunset glow on the snowy peaks.

Marie Louise's romantic German soul thrilled as she realized how deeply she had fallen in love with him. It was obvious that Napoleon had never understood her. He was only a boor by comparison with Neipperg.

One day Neipperg suggested:

"If you like, Madame, tomorrow we might climb the Rigi and see the sunrise from the summit."

Marie Louise clapped her hands. But Bausset, who was tortured with gout, excused himself.

"I don't see myself climbing up and down on the back of a mule," he said. "Besides, mist is bad for my rheumatism."

Méneval had rejoined the party the day before. He was grieved to note how far intimacy between the duchess and the general had gone. He side-stepped in his turn.

"Your Majesty must excuse me," he said. "I saw all the snow I ever want on the plains of Russia. . . ."

So Marie Louise and Neipperg set out by themselves to scale the heights. Neipperg was like an eagle carrying its prey to its eyrie. On their way, they stopped to admire the fairyland of light and shade which the mountains revealed for their benefit. Before them shone the eternal snows.

"Listen to the waterfall!" said Neipperg.

Marie Louise came close to him and stood silent. A dis-

tant, plaintive sound was carried to them on the wings of the wind.

"A cows' chorus!" murmured Marie Louise, in delight.

"Listen, listen!" she breathed, pressing herself against her companion. She took his hand.

Neipperg's one eye gleamed. Beneath its ardent glance Marie Louise's eyes sank. Their two heads came closer together. Marie Louise laid her head on Neipperg's shoulder. She murmured:

"Isn't this beautiful?"

Some hours later, in the inn, after they had dined alone together, she exclaimed ecstatically:

"Isn't this nice?"

At the end of September, the Duchess de Montebello received a letter from the ex-Empress of the French. It contained this passage, which brought a gleam of triumph to her eyes:

> ". . . I have told him (Napoleon) frankly that I cannot come at present. . . . Meanwhile I shall give them (the Ministers) my most sacred word of honor that I will not for the time being go to the island of Elba, and indeed that I will never go (for you know better than anybody else that I have no such desire). The Emperor is really too inconsiderate, too thoughtless. . . ."

The game was won. Napoleon had a wife no longer. A one-eyed gallant, who played on the hearts of fair ladies with all the virtuosity of Orpheus on his lute, had conquered her without drum or trumpet.

CHAPTER XXVII

MEANWHILE THE KING OF ROME...

BURSTING with health, flaunting the flag of happiness, Marie Louise returned to Schönbrunn on October 6th, 1814.

For the time being, she decided to hold herself aloof from the festivities which were turning Vienna upside down. Emperors and kings, princes and dukes, the cream of the courts of Europe, had met in the Austrian capital. Anything served to celebrate Napoleon's fall: galas, concerts, routs, tourneys. Life was a round of sleigh-races and living pictures, hunts and reviews. There was waltzing in every class of society. There was dancing at every street-corner. There was a show of jewels, flowers, velvet and lace that was to be talked about for the next hundred years.

But the Duchess of Parma led a very retired life. She was all wrapped up in her new love-affair. Neipperg never left her side.

Napoleon had ceased to matter for her. She gave up answering his letters, and handed over to her father all the missives she received from Elba. The French veneer which she had acquired during the four years she had spent in France had not had time to dry. It scaled off. She turned back into a German. For that matter, fundamentally she had never been anything else.

Meanwhile her succession to her duchy gave her plenty to think about. Acting on Neipperg's advice, she played her cards cleverly. She kept her ears wide open to all the intrigues of the Congress of Vienna when it opened on November 1st. She invited the Emperor of Russia to dinner, besieged him and cajoled him, and finally extracted a promise of support from him.

All these occupations left her little time to be a mother to her son.

On her return from Switzerland, she found him growing fast, and better-looking than ever. Every day he was brought to her after lunch. She gave him candies and played with him for a while. Sometimes, as he was a handsome child and did her credit, she took him for a drive with her in the Prater.

On such occasions, the boy was dressed in the uniform of an officer of the French hussars or in civilian clothes: breeches of white, blue or green cashmere, and a jacket of the same shade. Black shoes, a little blue cloak, and either a beaver hat or a white cocked-hat completed his costume.

Thus arrayed, he radiated childish innocence and elegance, and people cheered him as he passed; for he was very popular. Every Sunday the Viennese flocked to Schönbrunn, and they were delighted if they could carry away the memory of a glimpse of him.

"But isn't it a pity that he should have Napoleon for a father?" they asked, sighing.

The boy lived at Schönbrunn in all the trusting quiet of childhood. Madame de Montesquiou did not fail to note how soon Neipperg had come into favor with Marie Louise. She watched over the boy with more affection than ever, almost as though he had lost his mother.

In the depths of her heart, his governess had nothing but contempt for the woman who had deserted her husband

when disaster befell him; the woman who, but yesterday Empress of the French, now let herself be courted by a mere Austrian officer.

She realized that the boy had nobody left but herself. She alone really loved him. She alone could protect him. Her husband asked her to return to France. She replied:

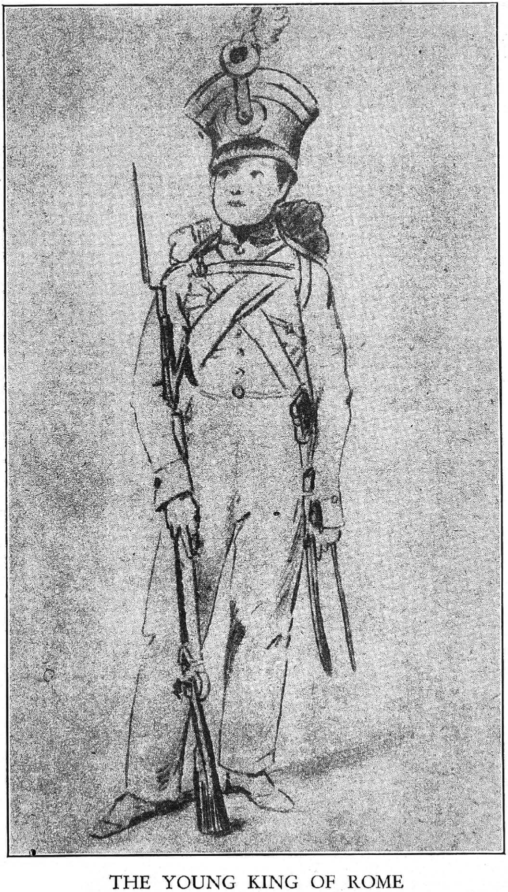
> "MY DEAR,
>
> "Do not make my return to France a matter of duty. If you do, you will put me in the most embarrassing position, and I shall have something on my conscience all my life. If this boy had a mother, well and good: I could hand him over to her with an easy mind. But a mother is the last thing in the world that she is. She is a person more indifferent to what becomes of him than the lowliest stranger in his service. . . ."

Madame de Montesquiou never left her pupil's side. She was there when he got out of bed, she made him say his prayers, she kept an eye on his meals, she watched over his education.

Sometimes Méneval lent her a hand. He knew everything; but he could say nothing. The two of them gazed sadly at the fair-haired boy who demanded that they should sacrifice themselves to make his exiled father less unhappy.

By now the boy could read French pretty well. He knew a little history and geography. Father Lanti was teaching him Italian, and he picked up a few words of German from his valet, Unterschill. As a playmate he was given little Emile Gobereau, the son of one of Marie Louise's valets, and the two of them sprawled on the historic carpet in his bedroom.

Every day Fanny Soufflot took him for a walk, holding him by the hand. Fifteen-year-old Fanny was pretty and



THE YOUNG KING OF ROME

cheerful, she knew how to keep him amused, and he loved her with all his heart.

One day they were out in the park, designed by Le Nôtre, and planted with elm, oak and lime. They made their way in between the somber hedges, occasionally relieved by the flashing white of statues. Fanny tried to interest the boy in the flowers, in the birds, in the clouds; but he shook his head.

"It's dreary here," he said. "I wish I were back at Saint Cloud."

Slowly, by way of winding paths, they ascended to the Glorietta, standing on a grassy hillock with all the mannered grace of its Italian architecture.

When they reached the great pond, full of tritons and walruses, the boy amused himself by throwing bread to the carp. Then he tugged discreetly at Fanny's hand.

"Where do you want to go?" she asked.

"I want to go and see the animals."

Why shouldn't he? The boy ran on ahead and was the first to reach the zoölogical gardens to the right of the palace. There he went into ecstasies over a new-born elephant. The sight of a capering chimpanzee gave him back the use of his tongue. He put his hand through the bars and stroked roes on their moist snouts, and rams and goats in between their ears.

"But where are my little sheep?" he asked.

He looked back with regret at the fine team which he had driven along the terrace of the Tuileries.

The Austrian Emperor had done what he could. He had given him a little donkey to replace his sheep, and plenty of toys besides. He was a good grandfather. He understood things. He was all the fonder of his grandson because he knew the boy had much for which to forgive him. But it was difficult to be a model grandfather and

a perfect Austrian Emperor at one and the same time, especially when his grandson was Napoleon's son.

For that matter, almost all the Imperial family bore witness to an affection for the prince which seemed to be sincere. Only Maria Ludovica raised her head against the boy like a little viper.

"If I were in your place," she said to her husband, "do you know what I'd do with the son of that Corsican scoundrel? I'd make a monk of him. A monk, I say! I'd shut him up in a monastery. Then he'd never have any children, and we'd be rid of the accursed race for ever."

Often the boy talked about his father. He expressed astonishment that he was away such a long time.

"Where is my father?" he asked. "Why doesn't he ever come to see me? When is he coming back?"

Madame de Montesquiou gave him such explanations as he was likely to understand. The Emperor was ill. He had gone on a long journey. He couldn't be expected back for some little time.

"Oh, I see," said the boy, nodding his head and setting his golden curls shaking.

One day his mother had occasion to scold him mildly. She reminded him that he was not a King any more.

"Oh, I'm not a King any more!" he exclaimed, clapping his hands in delight.

Then they took away the grand cross of the Legion of Honor which he wore on his hussar uniform. The boy pouted and flung himself into Madame de Montesquiou's arms in tears.

"So it's true, is it, Mamma Quiou? I'm really not a King any more?"

Everybody gave him toys. In addition, after keeping them several months, Louis XVIII finally sent to Vienna the toys which he had left behind in France.

"Aha!" exclaimed the boy, triumphantly. "The wicked King is afraid of us."

Among these toys were his sheep-drawn carriage, his Turk who played the mandolin, and his cage with the two mechanical singing birds. But the prince greatly preferred a wooden regiment of hussars given him by his great-uncle, the Archduke Charles. These were something like toys! Thanks to an ingenius mechanism, the horsemen, who were on movable feet, were able to execute certain essential maneuvers. They could form column, break ranks and charge at a gallop.

The boy had few visitors. Occasionally one of his uncles came and played with him. This was the young Archduke Francis Charles, the one who had burned Marie Louise's doll and declared that he was roasting Napoleon.

The archduke was nine years older than the prince, and this difference in their ages did not facilitate their playing together. Francis Charles always wanted to take the lead, but little Napoleon would not give way to him.

One day the archduke lost his temper.

"I won't play with a Frenchman!" he cried.

Little Napoleon went crimson with indignation, got on his high horse, and pointed a rosy finger at the rude boy.

"Madame Quiou," he commanded, "have this blackguard taken away!"

CHAPTER XXVIII

WAITING IN VAIN

In the courtyard of the White Horse at Fontainebleau, at noon on April 20th, Napoleon said good-by to his Old Guard. Attended by a few officers who had remained faithful to him, he said a few words to them, kissed the eagle which General Petit extended to him, and wound up:

"Farewell once more, my old comrades! May this last kiss of mine remain in your hearts! . . ."

Then he got into the carriage which was to take him to Fréjus, where he would embark for Elba. The Allies had allowed him six hundred men to accompany him into exile. Six thousand presented themselves, all ready to go with him.

Before his departure, Napoleon had a long talk with Caulaincourt.

"Go and see the Empress," he said to him, "but I definitely forbid you to urge her to join me. Let her own heart guide her. If it moves her to come to me, I shall receive her with open arms. If not, let her stay at Parma or Florence or in whatever duchy is granted to her. I ask her only to send me my son."

Napoleon now saw his future in less somber colors. To confirm his optimism, he read over again a letter which his father-in-law had written to him from Rambouillet on April 16th. In this letter, the Emperor Francis addressed

him as "My brother and dear son-in-law," assured him that Marie Louise should join him as soon as her health was restored, and promised to treat the King of Rome as though he were his own son.

Here was the Austrian Emperor's word pledged by a promise in writing. How could Napoleon suppose that, four days earlier, he had written to Metternich:

> "The essential thing is to get Napoleon away from France, and, please God, may he be sent far away! I do not approve the choice of the island of Elba. We cannot accept it as a lasting arrangement."

No sooner had Napoleon landed in Elba than he set about making preparations for his wife's arrival. She must have apartments worthy of her, both at Porto Ferrajo and at Porto Longone. He reserved the best rooms, the brightest and coolest rooms, for her. He put work in hand and hurried it up. Suppose she should arrive before everything was ready?

He suggested a symbolical design for the ceiling of one of the drawing-rooms, representing two pigeons tied together by a cord whose knot tightened as they flew away from one another. He looked forward to fireworks, balls, all kinds of festivities. Nothing must be lacking in the reception he prepared for his wife.

But weeks went by, and the Empress said no word about coming to join him. Napoleon was consumed with impatience. Marie Louise's letters became fewer. They seemed to Napoleon to be less affectionate. They rang false in his ears. What was happening?

Then he learned that Marie Louise had gone to Aix alone, leaving the little King behind at Schönbrunn. Napoleon scented some underhand maneuver. He had something like a presentiment that Marie Louise was betray-

ing him. He urged her to go to Tuscany, "where there are waters just as good and of the same nature as those of Aix in Savoy." He sent to Parma a detachment of Polish light cavalry to form her guard, and a hundred carriage-horses.

As yet he did not really doubt his wife. He was sure that she was acting against her will, that she was being imposed upon and misled. He did not even accuse his father-in-law of these intrigues. They could only be the work of some officious Minister. He rebelled against them.

"Nobody," he wrote, "has any rights over the Empress and her son."

At the beginning of August he could stand it no longer. He sent Colonel Lanczinski to Aix, with instructions to tell Marie Louise that he was expecting her at the end of the month.

"Make a complaint," he wrote to the colonel, "against the procedure which is being adopted of preventing my wife and my son from writing to me. This procedure is most unworthy."

A few days later, he sent Captain Hurault, who was married to one of the Empress's "red" women, to Aix. He was to see the Empress in secret, and advise her to make her escape and go to Genoa, where the brig *Inconstant*—such are the ironies of Fate—would be waiting to bring her to Elba.

But the captain failed in his undertaking. Madame de Brignole gave him away to Neipperg, who had him arrested and escorted to Paris.

Finally, on August 28th, Napoleon received the letter which Marie Louise had entrusted to Bausset on July 31st, together with the little marble bust of the King of Rome. He took heart again. Meanwhile the heat drove him to take refuge at the hermitage of the Madonna di Marciano,

over three thousand feet above sea-level, in the midst of an oak forest. The hermits made room for him by occupying the cellars. Madame Mère, who had joined him, lodged in the village nine hundred feet lower down.

In the morning of September 1st, Napoleon was informed that a lady, accompanied by a handsome fair-haired boy, had landed during the night. He jumped out of bed.

"It's they! It's Marie Louise and the King of Rome!"

He hastened to meet them, and whom did he see? Madame Walewska and her son. Still, he was delighted to see the dearest of all his mistresses and the son whom she had given him. He kept them for forty-eight hours, but in the greatest secrecy, lest Marie Louise should get word of their visit to him and take offense at it.

September passed, and October followed. Napoleon's suspense became unendurable. Marie Louise had almost given up writing to him. He had to wait until January 1st before he received a few cold lines from her. This was the last echo of their love. After that, she never wrote again.

The only news of his son which reached him was such as Ménéval was able to send to Grand Marshal Bertrand through the medium of his bankers. It was too much. Napoleon complained to the English commissioner resident in the island about the inhuman way in which he was being treated.

"In modern times," he said, "no example can be quoted of such unfairness, such barbarity, without any reason of State to justify it."

Then he found a source of hope. The Grand Duke of Tuscany had resumed possession of his State. He was the former Grand Duke of Würtzburg, who had been one of the witnesses to Napoleon's marriage, and godfather by proxy of the King of Rome. Napoleon called him "my dear

uncle," surrounded him with attentions, and loaded him with presents. It was to Napoleon that the Grand Duke owed the fact that he had kept his duchy during the storm which had swept Europe for the past twenty years. If he was not an ingrate, he might be ready to serve Napoleon as an intermediary.

Putting his pride in his pocket, on October 10th Napoleon wrote to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Humbly he asked him for leave to send him a letter for the Empress once a week.

His Highness at Florence was much embarrassed. Finally he decided to hand Napoleon's letter over to the Austrian Emperor. Thus faced with a thorny problem for his conscience, Francis, after several days' deliberation, at length consigned the letter to the Imperial archives, after showing it to Marie Louise and formally forbidding her to answer it.

When he learnt what had happened to his letter, Napoleon shut himself up in silence. He wrote no more. He made no further overtures.

But day and night, his son's picture was never out of his mind. He could still see him as he had left him lying in his cot: that little boy who was all his hope.

He loved talking about the boy. Never did he let a day pass without recalling some story about him. He delighted in remembering the departure of Marie Louise and the King of Rome from the Tuileries, and the boy's wrath and reluctance to let them take him away. Here, Napoleon thought, his son showed a gift of foresight most valuable in one who might some day be called upon to lead a nation and rule a State. But would the Prince of Parma ever have a chance to make use of this gift?

"Poor little devil!" he said to himself.

Many a time in the course of the day Napoleon took his

snuff-box out of his pocket, not to take a pinch, but to look at the portrait of the little King painted on its gold-mounted tortoise-shell lid. He studied the portrait for a moment or two, sighed, and put the snuff-box back in his pocket.

One afternoon he had it in his hands while he was inspecting some work in progress. He stumbled, and the snuff-box slipped from his grasp and fell to the ground. Despite his paunch, he bent down hurriedly, picked it up, and wiped it on his sleeve. He had gone quite pale.

"Thank God," he exclaimed, "it isn't damaged. I should have been so sorry if my clumsiness had spoiled my poor little boy's face."

He turned to his suite. He felt that he must explain his feelings to them.

"I've a bit of a mother's affection for him," he said. "In fact, I've a great deal of such an affection—and I'm not ashamed of it."

He paused, nodded his head, and completed his train of thought.

"I wouldn't like to count on the friendship of a father who didn't love his children. . . ."

One day in December, Grand Marshal Bertrand's brother landed on the island. He showed Napoleon some engravings which he had bought in Rome on his way. Napoleon looked at them. All at once, he flushed.

"Why," he cried, "here's one of Marie Louise!"

But he soon recovered from his disturbance. He studied the engraving and criticized it.

"It's like her," he said, "but there's something about the mouth which isn't the Empress."

The next engraving represented the King of Rome saying his prayers. At the sight of it, Napoleon's hands trembled. He gazed at the engraving for some time, and made no effort to hide his emotion.

"My son! My little son! . . ."

The note of sadness which weighted his voice clutched at the hearts of his suite. Nobody said a word. All at once, Napoleon stood up and took refuge in his bedroom. It was some time before he came out again; and when he did his face was drawn.

The boy he loved was not now the heir to his Empire, the first link in the chain of his dynasty. No, he was just his son, the child of his flesh, the son whom he was not allowed to kiss and caress, the son who had been stolen from him.

The injustice of it, the vile trick of which he was the victim, wrung his heart cruelly. His impotence filled him with rage and revolt.

"My son," he said, "my son has been taken away from me like the sons of the vanquished in days gone by, to grace the triumph of the victors."

CHAPTER XXIX

THE RETURN FROM ELBA

NAPOLEON was too close, and he loomed too big. The shadow which he continued to cast over Europe frightened the victors, still wondering how they had ever managed to overcome him.

All those emperors, kings and princes, assembled at Vienna, who could not speak his name without a shudder, were never far from Napoleon's thoughts. He knew that they found him an embarrassment. He felt their hatred around him like something palpable. He was aware that there were plots to assassinate him, and that, failing his death, plans were being made to remove him elsewhere. Talleyrand had suggested the Azores, and Pozzo di Borgo, Saint Helena.

Meanwhile Napoleon had unmasked the machinations of his father-in-law. He was now certain that the Austrian Emperor, false to his pledged word, had planned to rob him of his wife and his son, and never meant to restore them to him. He saw a barrier of silence and isolation slowly closing around him.

His position was now clear. He could expect no help from anybody except himself. If he wanted ever to clasp his wife and his son to his heart again, he must go and wrest them from their ravishers, sword in hand.

Napoleon made up his mind to act. He awaited only a favorable opportunity to set out.

On February 13th, 1815, Fleury de Chaboulon, who had been sub-prefect of Rheims the year before, arrived at Porto Ferrajo in disguise. He brought Napoleon a letter from Maret, in which the former Minister for Foreign Affairs set forth the situation in France.

The Bourbons were unpopular. The army was dissatisfied and ripe for revolt. The people looked back on their Emperor with regret. Let Napoleon return to France. He would be welcomed by the nation as a liberator.

Napoleon hesitated no longer. He gave orders for departure. Preparations were rushed through in the greatest secrecy. On February 25th, Napoleon addressed a proclamation to the Army:

"... Victory will advance at the charge. The Eagle with the national colors will fly from belfry to belfry to the towers of Notre Dame."

The next day, at eight o'clock in the evening, he embarked for France. Standing in the *Inconstant's* bows, he meditated, with his eyes fixed on the wintry sea.

A great hope filled him. The world of adventure lay before him anew. But what he wanted to win back was not so much supreme power as a little boy's fair head and two innocent arms, whose embrace now meant more to him than his throne.

On the night of March 6th, the Empress Maria Ludovica had invited the Court and the members of the Congress to a gala performance, at which living pictures were to be given.

Festivities were in full swing. The principal scene was much admired. It represented a meeting between Maximilian I and Marie of Burgundy, from a picture by the

Viennese painter, Petter. In it figured the prettiest ladies of the Court, the Duchesse de Sagan, the Comtesse de Fuchs, and Talleyrand's niece.

Waltz music set everybody dreaming.

All at once, nobody knew whence it came or by whom, a rumor ran, like a bat with silent wings, whose shadow brings bad luck. People whispered to one another:

"Do you know what I've just heard?"

"No. What is it?"

"He's escaped!"

"Who's escaped?"

"Napoleon. . . . He left Elba on February 26th."

Cheeks turned pale under make-up. Everybody felt a stab of fear. People refused to believe it.

"It's only a false report. Who told you?"

Names were whispered.

"Lord Stewart, the English plenipotentiary . . . Corsini . . . Talleyrand. . . ."

That sounded more serious. Talleyrand was well informed.

"But where is he going?"

"Nobody knows. . . . Perhaps to Naples. . . . Perhaps to America."

Everybody thought: "To Paris!" but nobody dared to say it.

The characters in the living pictures gathered together and argued excitedly, forgetful of precedence. The ancient armor of Maximilian and his soldiers filled the great room with a clink of metal. People glanced at the door furtively, as though the sinister shape of a little hat might appear there at any moment. The atmosphere became oppressive. Everybody present felt that his possessions, his honor, his very life were all being threatened.

Anger, dismay and hatred falsified judgment and dis-

torted feeling. Snatches of sentences whistled through the air like bullets.

"If he's taken alive, he ought to be hanged. . . . He ought to be shot. . . . Death to him! . . ."

Leaning against a marble pillar, Talleyrand screwed up his eyes, fluffed up his shirt-frill, shrugged his shoulders, and declared, in a judicial tone of voice:

"We'll have to get rid of him like a mad dog."

Suddenly everybody remembered important business at home which would not wait. In a few moments, the palace was deserted. Fear had cracked the whip of panic. Thus small birds of prey take to flight and come to earth when the eagle's wings loom over the horizon.

Metternich, who had not attended the gala performance, had gone to bed late. Early in the morning, an urgent dispatch was brought to him.

"What is it about?" he asked, sleepily.

"A dispatch from our consul at Genoa, Your Excellency."

"Our consul at Genoa," said the Chancellor to himself. "A minor official trying to make himself important. I'll attend to it in the morning."

Half an hour later, however, finding himself unable to get to sleep again, he took up the dispatch and opened it. His hair stood up on his head. He sprang out of bed.

"Bonaparte escaped!"

A few moments later, with his lips tense with hatred and his eyes bloodshot with bile, he had himself announced to his master the Emperor. By ten o'clock in the morning, he had seen the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, and all the other kings, princes and dukes. By eleven o'clock, couriers were carrying orders to the Allied armies, which were on their way back to their garrisons, to about-face and march once more to the French frontier.

Marie Louise heard the news later in the day, upon her return from a romantic ride on horseback with Neipperg. It was Neipperg himself who undertook to break it to her, as gently as his knowledge of her sensitiveness, her touchiness, demanded.

Marie Louise nearly fainted. She sank into an armchair and burst into tears. She sobbed so loudly that she could be heard in the antechamber. Neipperg could find no words to comfort her. His expressions of optimism did not suffice to relieve her distress.

The Archduke John was announced. He found Marie Louise weeping as though at a death-bed. He offered his sympathy.

"I'm so sorry for you, my poor Louise. All I hope, for your sake and for ours, is that he may break his neck. . . ."

Marie Louise went on moaning. Fate was too unkind to her. Life was all troubles these days. Her friend, Madame de Brignole was very ill, there was even talk of administering the last sacrament to her.

"Long live the Emperor!" shouted the servants of her household, when the news of Napoleon's escape reached them. Marie Louise was cut to the quick, and nearly fainted again. In a fury, Neipperg threatened the servants with hanging, and dismissed the lot of them.

Marie Louise felt her flesh creeping. The future yawned before her like a pit of hell, with Napoleon awaiting her in the depths of it, as inviting as a demon. Must she sink into it? Ah no, anything rather than return to him! She wrung her hands.

"I'd rather go into a convent. . . ."

There was no doubt that Napoleon would demand her back, She was not far from hating this husband of hers, who carried his audacity, his lack of consideration, to the point of wanting to have his wife and his son with him!

Why had he left Elba? Why couldn't he have remained quiet? She could have arranged her life so nicely without him: a peaceful, uneventful, luxurious life, with a lover devoted to her, and the prospect of playing the Sovereign in a little duchy and having all the advantages of ruling without any of the inconveniences. She was only twenty-four, and love and adulation and a nice sovereignty awaited her—and now her husband had come back....

If she obeyed Bonaparte's summons, she would have to resume her life as Empress. She would once more be only a pawn in his hands. She would have to submit to her lord and master's orders and be at his beck and call.

Marie Louise buried her buzzing head in her hands. What was she to do?

Méneval advised her to join Napoleon at once. It was her duty as much as her interest.

But Neipperg was on the watch, and his arguments proved more persuasive.

It would be madness for her to join Napoleon. He had no chance. The whole world was against him. He would be crushed once more, and, as for her, she would lose her duchy forever in the disorder.

Marie Louise looked up, startled. Neipperg felt that he had touched her in a sensitive spot, and he pressed his advantage cleverly.

"Louise," he said, "my dear Louise, consider for yourself. Remember all the trouble we had to get the Czar and the King of Prussia to promise that you should be given Parma. And don't forget that the agreement is not yet signed. Talleyrand is still maneuvering, and you know how dangerous that man is. The ex-Queen of Etruria is demanding the duchy for her son, Talleyrand is supporting her more strongly than ever, and he has influential

people on his side. One false move on your part, and he may still win. . . ."

Neipperg stopped. Beneath the burning eye which he bent upon her, Marie Louise felt her will-power weaken.

"You are right, my dear. . . . I won't go. . . . But tell me what I ought to do."

A slight smile twitched Neipperg's lips.

"That's quite simple," he said. "Write a letter to your father, and say that you put yourself under his protection. You will thus give proof of your goodwill and submission. The Allies will be bound to take it into account, and you will make sure of your duchy. . . ."

Marie Louise stood up. She felt as though she had come to life again. . . .

When he received Marie Louise's letter in his study, Metternich would have jumped for joy, if an Austrian Chancellor could have done so without compromising his dignity. She had written:

> "MY VERY DEAR FATHER,
>
> "At this moment when a fresh crisis threatens the peace of Europe, and I am menaced with further misfortune falling upon me, I cannot hope for a safer refuge or a more beneficent protection than that which I request from your fatherly affection on behalf of myself and my son."

Metternich was exultant. He measured the moral effect which Marie Louise's letter would produce upon his new allies. This formal repudiation of Napoleon by his wife would cement the Corsican brigand's reputation as an evil-doer.

On March 13th, the Powers assembled at the Congress of Vienna published a manifesto in which they declared

Napoleon to be an outlaw, under the ban of Europe and civilization, and held him up to public opprobrium.

Running his hands through his hair, Talleyrand had limped resentfully from one Congress table to another. He found the sentence on Napoleon too mild.

"He's only a brigand," he declared, "and he ought to be treated as a brigand. We should have given everybody the right to kill him at sight...."

The next day, delighted with himself, Metternich brought the text of the manifesto to Marie Louise. As she read it, she felt a sense of anxiety and something like remorse.

"If he is taken prisoner," she asked, "what will be done with him?"

Metternich's reply was definite.

"In Austria, he would be shut up in a fortress. In France, he would probably be hanged...."

Marie Louise thought that over, like a good mother.

"After all," she said, "it would be a pity if my son had a father who was hanged...."

CHAPTER XXX

REFUSAL

ONCE the news of Napoleon's escape from Elba was confirmed, Metternich became a prey to a fresh anxiety. Suppose the French should try to kidnap the Prince of Parma and take him to his father?

At all costs, Metternich must keep his hostage. Hager, the Minister of Police, doubled the guards around Schönbrunn. An exact description of the boy was sent to the frontier posts, with orders that he was not to be allowed to leave the country on any pretext.

Hager found the prince's entourage suspect. Had not Anatole de Montesquiou, his governess's son, been seen waiting at the end of the park with a berlin all ready for a long journey? Hager declared that he could not undertake responsibility for the boy's custody under such conditions. Napoleon's son must be removed from Schönbrunn to Vienna, where it would be easier to guard him, and the French still in his service must be dismissed.

The Emperor admitted the force of these arguments. On March 19th, the prince was taken to the Hofburg in Vienna.

Every morning, Italian soldiers paraded past the palace, waving their hats on the end of their rifles, and shouting: "*Evviva il nostro Napoleone!*"

It was clearly time to strengthen the bars of the boy's cage. The next step was to make a clean sweep of those

around him. On March 20th, Baron von Wessenberg, the Grand Chamberlain, presented himself before Madame de Montesquiou and transmitted to her an order from the Emperor relieving her of her duties at once. The governess protested, wept and entreated. But the Grand Chamberlain stood firm. The Emperor's will was irrevocable.

"In that case," said Madame de Montesquiou, "I require a written order and a medical certificate attesting that I leave the prince in good health."

They hastened to satisfy her requirements. The Emperor gave her a testimonial of his esteem, to which he added a set of sapphires. Marie Louise, for her part, sent her an affectionate letter, together with a lock of the boy's hair.

On March 21st, Madame de Montesquiou kissed for the last time the child to whom she had been a mother for the past four years, and took her leave of him.

She counted on leaving Vienna the next day, but she reckoned without Metternich, whose subtle hatred of Napoleon neglected nothing. If Madame de Montesquiou returned to France, her first concern would be to give Napoleon news of his son. He did not deserve that satisfaction, and it would be good strategy to deprive him of it. Besides, Madame de Montesquiou had seen too much at Schönbrunn.

So, when she proposed to leave Vienna, she was refused a passport. For the next three months, she had to live confined in a little two-room apartment, in company with her son Anatole, who had been stopped at the frontier, arrested, and brought back to Vienna.

Meanwhile Ménéval, Napoleon's faithful secretary, went on struggling vainly in an effort to persuade Marie Louise to join his master. He harried her without respite. How could she think of remaining apart from the Emperor? He loved her, and she had nothing with which to reproach

him. Did she not see that her separation from him would put her wholly in the wrong?

Marie Louise listened in embarrassment to Méneval's lecture. Then, with a hypocritical sigh, she said:

"Since I did not accompany Napoleon to Elba, when he was persecuted by the whole of Europe, it would be improper for me to join him on the throne now that he has recovered his power.... As for my son, I shall not forget him. Once I am established in Parma, I shall be able to save half a million francs a year for him and so make sure that he will be independent...."

Méneval stared in astonishment at this Emperor's daughter and Emperor's wife who talked like a shopkeeper.

"Madame," he replied, "Napoleon's son is in no need of money. What it is essential to keep for him is a throne."

But Marie Louise was scarcely listening to him. Obviously her thoughts were elsewhere.

Neipperg had left her on April 1st to fight against Murat. Their farewell had been heartrending. Neipperg had promised to write to her every day. Marie Louise's thoughts were with the man she loved. She trembled at the idea of his being exposed to the terrible chances of war. He had now been gone eighteen days, and as yet she had received no letter from him. She spent her days in anxiety and her nights in weeping. Her impatience was equaled only by the impatience with which Napoleon in Elba had awaited a letter from the woman he loved.

Méneval realized that there was only one thing left for him to do. He himself asked to be relieved of his duties. His request was readily granted. They were only too glad to be rid of him.

On May 7th, he said good-by to the young prince. The next day, he took leave of Marie Louise. She said to him, with a touch of emotion:

"All contact between myself and France must henceforth cease, Monsieur Ménéval; but I shall always remember my adopted country...."

Heart-broken, Mènéval asked her:

"What am I to say to the Emperor on your behalf, Madame? Can I give him any hope?..."

But Marie Louise cut him short.

"Assure the Emperor that he has my best wishes.... Try to make him understand my unhappy position.... He must accept our separation; but let him be sure that I retain an unaltered feeling of esteem and gratitude towards him."

Marie Louise seemed in better spirits. She had good reason. During the last few days, good news had showered upon her.

On April 23rd, the Countess von Neipperg had died. Moreover, the ex-Empress of the French was on the point of reaping the reward of her submission and her cowardice. On May 27th, the Congress of Vienna, though without saying a word about her son or the succession, granted her the duchies of Parma, Piacenza and Guastella.

At the same time, Neipperg received a recompense to which his brains, his zeal, his initiative and his gallantry fairly entitled him. He was appointed Court Marshal: a title which gave him the privilege of riding in the same carriage with Marie Louise on the occasion of official ceremonies.

God be thanked, Marie Louise said to herself, her horizon was clearing. Only the shadow cast by the wings of the escaped Eagle sometimes passed over her smiling prospects. It made her shudder.

"I make a vow," she told Countess Mitrowski, her lady in waiting, "that I will go on pilgrimage to Maria-Zell on foot if he is taken alive."

CHAPTER XXXI

"A COBBLER IS HAPPIER THAN I AM"

As the master of France advanced in triumph, the Paris papers became suddenly inspired with a timely enthusiasm for him. Their tone exactly reflected the progress of his adventure.

"Bonaparte has disembarked at Golfe Juan" (March 1st).

"Grenoble has opened its gates to General Bonaparte" (March 8th).

"Napoleon has made his entrance into Lyons" (March 11th).

"His Majesty the Emperor has arrived at the Tuileries Palace" (March 20th).

Napoleon did not wait until the tricolor flew triumphantly over Paris, to write to his wife. From Grenoble, from Lyons, from Fontainebleau, almost every day, he sent her letters, asking her to come and join him as soon as possible.

Once he was back in Paris, though he had to get the country in order, reorganize the army, refill the Treasury, revive national feeling to meet coming trials, still, his first concern was to recall his wife and his son.

They must be there. He must be able to show them to the people. Without them he was lost. His son, above all,

was essential to him in order to weave together the nation and his Empire by fresh links of enthusiasm and affection.

On March 28th, Napoleon wrote to his wife:

> "MY DEAR LOUISE,
>
> "I am master of all France. The whole people and the whole army are in a state of the greatest enthusiasm. The so-called King has fled to England, if not further. The commanders of all the fortresses over which my flag floats and all my Old Guard are around me. I spend my days reviewing 25,000 men at a time. France fears nobody. I shall expect you during the month of April. Be at Strassburg with my son on the 15th or the 20th.
>
> "Good-by, my dear. All yours.
>
> "NAPOLEON."

Six days later, he wrote again:

> "I am beloved by everybody and master of everything. All I lack is you, my dear Louise, and my son. So come to me at once by way of Strassburg. . . ."

Let them make haste. Everything was ready to welcome them.

On April 1st, Napoleon wrote to the Austrian Emperor, appealed to his feelings as a father, and asked him for his wife and his son, the object of his dearest affections. Every day he sent ambassadors, envoys and secret agents to Vienna bearing letters and instructions. He was full of courage and hope.

To be sure, Marie Louise had not joined him when he was banished to Elba. But now that he was back from exile and Emperor again, doubtless the lure of the throne would make her hasten to him.

But the days went by, and Napoleon had no word. He

did not yet know that his emissaries, Flahaut, Montrond and Stassart, had failed in their mission.

At the news of his return, all the women who had sincerely loved him hastened to his side. Madame de Pellapra came from Lyons. Madame Walewska came from Naples. Mademoiselle George, mere actress though she was, made a point of testifying her attachment to him. His step-daughter Hortense joined him too. Only his legitimate wife was absent.

Despite appearances, Napoleon still found excuses for Marie Louise. If she had not obeyed his summons, it was because she had been prevented.

He refused to believe that she no longer loved him. She was his wife. There had never been a harsh word between them. He still had too vivid a memory of her affection, her passion, to doubt her.

But Marie Louise's silence was endless. There was nothing from her: not a word, not a sign of life. She might as well be dead.

Then, little by little, light dawned on Napoleon. At first it was but a faint, murky ray; but day by day it became brighter and more cruelly penetrating.

The first traveler whom Napoleon was able to question was Captain Hurault, who arrived from Vienna at the end of March. But Hurault was reticent. He knew nothing. He had been kept at a distance. He was not familiar with the secrets of the Empress's circle.

Then Montrond arrived with a letter from Méneval to Caulaincourt, who hastened to show it to Napoleon. Méneval cautiously raised a corner of the veil.

> "The Empress's mind has been so worked upon that she can contemplate return to France only with terror. All possible means have been employed for the last six months to alienate her from the Emperor."

"Ah," cried Napoleon, "I knew it! I knew they must have done violence to her feelings for me and for France."

But he was still doubtful. He wanted details of this hateful machination. Would Ballouhey, Marie Louise's accountant, be able finally to clear up this inexplicable mystery?

Ballouhey arrived from Vienna on April 28th. Napoleon was so impatient to see him that he posted an orderly at his door, with orders to bring him along without even giving him time to change his boots.

Alas, a fresh disappointment awaited Napoleon. Ballouhey was a decent fellow, but a poor observer. He knew nothing. He had kept his nose to his account-books. He had seen nothing, heard nothing. At least, so he said. . . .

There remained Ménéval, whose departure from Vienna was at hand. He would know. Napoleon was sure of that. Ah, when would he be able to question him, to get the truth out of him, even though it cut him to the heart?

The two of them were in the Emperor's study at the Tuileries. Napoleon, in foot-grenadier's uniform—royal blue cloth with white lapels and scarlet epaulettes—stood leaning against the mantelpiece. Logs were burning in the fireplace, although it was the middle of May.

At last he had got hold of Ménéval, with his secret inside him, like a nut in which the almond might be either sound or rotten. Napoleon standing opposite Ménéval studied his secretary with his keen eyes. He found him aged and thinner. His hair, brushed back, had gone white.

The varying blue of the Emperor's eyes went suddenly black, and Ménéval felt them fixed upon him. They seemed to burn him. Then questions poured out of Napoleon's mouth like a flow of lava.

"Well, Ménéval, you've just left my son. Tell me all

about him. How is he? Is he in good health? Has he grown? Come on, tell me everything you can—everything, mind you! I want to know everything."

Ill at ease, Méneval did his best to smile.

"Sire," he said, "the prince is in excellent health. He is strong for his age, he is very much alive, and everything about him promises a long, healthy life. He has developed a lot, and he measures two feet six. He still has his lovely fair hair, falling in big curls on his shoulders...."

His lovely fair hair! Napoleon closed his eyes for a moment, to capture the blessed vision which those words evoked. Then he opened them again, and asked eagerly:

"And do they take good care of him? Whom has he got around him?"

"Madame Soufflot, her daughter, and Madame Marchand, the nurse. They are the only Frenchwomen left. But Your Majesty may be easy in your mind. They watch over him with all the love with which all France could surround the prince."

"Good-hearted women! I won't forget them. But what about Madame de Montesquiou?"

"She has been replaced by a Countess Mitrowski, who is very much in favor."

Napoleon turned pale.

"Oh, to think of my son in the hands of an Austrian woman! But, in that case, why has Madame de Montesquiou not returned to France?"

"They kept her in Vienna by force, Sire. They refused her a passport."

The Emperor kicked viciously with his heel at the logs in the fireplace and set the sparks flying.

"I'll take my revenge for all that!" he cried. "But go on, Méneval. You were saying that my son is very wide-awake...."

"Most precocious, Sire, full of brains. You'll scarcely believe it; but already he's got a taste for soldiering."

"Has he? At his age?"

"One day he said to me: 'I want to be a soldier, like Papa. Then I'll lead charges, like him.' I objected: 'But the bayonets will stop you, Prince.' He shook his head confidently, and said to me: 'But won't I have a sword to sweep them aside?' "

"Dear little fellow! . . ."

Napoleon said nothing for a few moments. His eyes strayed around the room, gathering memories. It was in this study that he had spent, with his son, perhaps the happiest hours of his life. Here was the corner of the desk against which the boy had one day bumped his forehead so hard that it made him cry.

"Fie, Sire," his father had said to him, as he gave him a kiss, "that's naughty! A King mustn't cry."

Here was the mirror at which Napoleon had made funny faces to amuse his son. Here was the carpet on which the two of them had played with the movable mahogany pieces: one at real war, the other at war for fun.

Then, with a quiver in his voice, the Emperor asked:

"Does he remember his father?"

Méneval's face shone with the joy which he could give his master.

"Sire, if anybody mentions your name, he never takes his eyes from him."

"But does anybody ever talk about me?"

"Often, very often. . . . For example, a month or two ago Sir Neil Campbell, the English commodore who accompanied you to Elba, came to see the prince. He took him up in his arms, kissed him on both cheeks, and said to him: 'Your Papa told me to give you a kiss from him.'

The prince was holding a German doll. He dashed it down on the ground so violently that it broke, and burst into tears. 'Poor Papa,' he said, 'poor Papa! . . .' "

There was a long silence. They could hear the crackling of the fire and the sound of troops assembling in the place du Carrousel for a review. Napoleon raised his head. He looked at his secretary with a face which had suddenly gone haggard.

"Méneval," he said, in a hollow voice, "a cobbler is happier than I am. At least he has his wife and his children beside him. . . ."

Then he started walking up and down the room, with his hands behind his back, questioning Méneval all the time. He wanted to know everything. He was interested in the smallest details about his son's games, his walks, his clothes. Méneval answered obediently, and so the time passed. Little by little, night fell, bringing the darkness so suitable for terrible confessions.

By now, Napoleon was almost afraid of hearing the truth. He did not dare to look at Méneval as he asked:

"And what about the Empress? Did you see her before you left?"

"I went to take leave of her. . . . We had a long conversation. . . . When we parted, she gave me this snuff-box, with her monogram in diamonds on it. . . ."

Then, scarcely moving his lips, he added:

"She seemed to me very sad, Sire—yes, really very sad. . . ."

His words, conventional and reticent though they were, still fired Napoleon with a little hope.

"What did she say to you? Did she think she could soon come and join me?"

Méneval said nothing. Napoleon persisted, trembling with impatience:

"Come on, speak, man! I want to hear the whole truth."

"Sire," Ménéval went on, "she said to me: 'I am in a difficult position. I cannot go against my family. I was born under an unlucky star, and I shall never be happy. . . .' "

Napoleon nodded his head.

"Indeed, she has had a hard time, through my fault. And she is young. She is a weak character, and easily influenced."

He was still ready to make excuses for her. Yet, her submission to her family astonished him.

"But didn't she get my letters—my letters of March 28th and April 4th, in which I asked her to come and join me by way of Strassburg?"

Ménéval hung his head and lied.

"No, Sire. They never reached her."

How could he tell Napoleon that one night in Vienna, between ten and eleven o'clock, he himself had received the first of these letters from one of Napoleon's emissaries; that he had delivered it to Marie Louise; and that the next day the Empress had handed it over to Metternich? How could he tell Napoleon that the letter entrusted to Montrond had also reached its destination? Again, he himself had had it in his hands; but, knowing what Marie Louise would do with it, in agreement with Madame de Montesquiou he had given it to Madame Soufflot to burn.

Napoleon had started walking up and down the room again, faster than ever in his agitation.

"Things will be very different," he said, "once victory has smiled on me again."

Then he returned to the subject which he had on his mind.

"But did you reason with her, Ménéval? Did you really point out to her her duty as a wife and a mother?"

"I did not fail to do so, Sire. I called her attention to the awkwardness of the false situation in which she was deliberately putting herself. She said to me: 'I should never agree to a divorce; but try and make the Emperor understand that our separation has become essential....'"

Napoleon lost his temper. The deep blue of his eyes turned steel-gray.

"It wasn't Marie Louise herself who thought of that. I know her heart too well.... But who turned her against me?... You know who it was, Ménéval. You saw them at their dirty work.... Was it my father-in-law? Was it my mother-in-law? Was it Metternich? And was it that fellow Neipperg too?... Just who is Neipperg? What kind of man is he? Tell me about him."

Napoleon flung himself upon Ménéval, seized him by the shoulders, and gazed into his eyes. Pale and trembling, the secretary looked away in embarrassment. But, little by little, such was Napoleon's magnetic power, he was forced to meet his eyes. The two men stared at one another.

Napoleon shuddered at the distress, the dismay, in Ménéval's eyes. It was as though his soul looked out of them and said:

"No, don't force me to tell you the whole truth! Have pity on me! Have pity on yourself!"

In his turn, Napoleon looked away. He took his hands off Ménéval.

No, he must not know. Words once spoken can never be recalled. He must not give Marie Louise's betrayal of him definite shape. He must keep his faith intact. He had to go on believing in his wife. He had to believe in her for his own sake. He had to believe in her for the sake of France. He must rouse the people to indignation. He must be able to say to them:

"See, your Empress and your future Emperor are kept

prisoners; and those who commit this crime are the people who claim to be acting in the name of virtue, in the name of divine law!"

So let Méneval keep silent. It was essential that Marie Louise, wife and mother, should still seem sure. The only part she could play was that of a victim, so that Napoleon might paint a heart-rending picture of her calvary which would raise all France against his enemies.

Napoleon pulled himself together.

"She need not worry," he said, bitterly. "I shall not use force to make her come back to me. If she does not change her mind, I can content myself with my son. . . . He, at least, is faithful to me. . . ."

Méneval's face lit up.

"Ah, indeed he is, Sire!" he exclaimed.

Napoleon looked at his secretary in surprise.

"What do you mean by that, Méneval? Have you still something to tell me?"

"Yes, Sire. . . ."

In a voice broken with emotion Méneval went on:

"Before I left Vienna, I went to the Hofburg to say good-by to the prince. I found him with his new governess and Madame Soufflot. Usually, when he saw me, he ran to meet me, clapping his hands, bubbling over with chatter and laughter. But this time he didn't. He stared at me from a distance as though I were a stranger. I went over to him, took him by the hand, and said:

"I'm going to see your Papa again, Prince. Have you anything to say to him?

"He glanced at his governess, and looked up at me sadly. Then he gently took his hand out of mine, and, without answering me, went and stood in silence in a window-recess. From there he kept his eye on me. I took my leave of the ladies, and went over to him again. As I bent down

to kiss him, he glanced at his governess to make sure she was not looking. Then he pulled me by the sleeve, and, in a trembling little voice, whispered to me very low:

"'Monsieur Méva, tell him that I love him just as much as ever....'"

The two men, the Emperor and his subject, gazed at one another, with the tears running down their cheeks.

"My son!" breathed Napoleon. "They've robbed me of a boy like that...."

He drew himself up and clenched his fists.

"God," he growled, "it will take plenty of blood to expiate such a crime!..."

CHAPTER XXXII

NAPOLEON II

HENCEFORTH Napoleon could make no mistake about it. He could obtain his wife and his son only by war, only by victory. He must win.

But he doubted himself. The task imposed upon him was beyond the strength of any man, even a genius. The Treasury was empty. The army, lacking in officers and composed of conscripts, had lost faith in their leader's invincibility. The people were like a great lion exhausted after a score of years of fighting, still licking its wounds and growling when its tamer tried to make it stand up again.

The stakes were so high that they made Napoleon tremble.

Ah, if only he were allowed a little respite! But he had no time. England's inexhaustible gold was already letting loose against France the endless hordes of Germany and Russia.

Napoleon set off for the north on June 12th. He left behind him an anxious middle class, concerned above all with their incomes; a nobility who were trafficking with the enemy; a House of Representatives who only awaited their chance to take their revenge for his *coup d'état* of Brumaire 18th; and a ministerial council full of fools and

traitors, among whom Fouché, whom he had again made Minister of Police, was not the least.

Napoleon was aware of all this. But he was also aware that to all those who remained faithful to him he must throw victory and glory, glory and victory, like lumps of meat to a wild beast which would otherwise devour him.

The start of his campaign gave him some hope. On June 16th he won a victory at Ligny. But two days later came Waterloo and disaster.

Bertrand, Drouot and Flahaut carried Napoleon away from the battlefield by force. He had wanted to be killed with his Old Guard, cut to pieces by the English grapeshot. He fled, livid in the face, speechless with despair, with tears of rage running down his cheeks. His routed army growled around him like an angry torrent, bearing its Emperor away with it like a straw.

Three days later, Napoleon was back in Paris. His first words were to ask Caulaincourt about the House of Representatives.

The House of Representatives was hostile to him, and found support among the liberals and the royalists. Napoleon wanted to go on fighting, raise more men, equip them, drive the enemy out of France. But events left him no time.

Davout, Lucien and Carnot urged him to dissolve Parliament; but he did not dare to do so. Despite Lucien's efforts, the House of Representatives acted too quickly for him. La Fayette, Lanjuinais and Manuel led the opposition to him and directed the attack upon him.

Resistance would mean civil war.

"I do not return from Elba to bathe Paris in blood," said Napoleon.

There was talk of his abdication and a regency. Hor-

tense, who was with him, suggested that he should appeal to the Austrian Emperor and put himself under his protection.

"Write to my father-in-law?" cried Napoleon. "Never! I have too bitter a grudge against him. Was he not cruel enough to rob me of my wife and my son?"

Meanwhile he was hemmed in on all sides. He must make up his mind. On June 22nd, at one o'clock, General Solignac arrived at the Elysée. He announced that the Houses of Parliament demanded Napoleon's immediate abdication. Otherwise they would declare him dethroned.

Napoleon was tired of fighting. His nerves were on edge. So they wanted him to abdicate, did they? Very well, he was ready to sign the instrument of his abdication.

Walking up and down the room, he dictated the last document of his life as a sovereign, to his brother Lucien. Through the open windows came the clamor of the crowd which had gathered at the low wall of the avenue Marigny. They kept shouting:

"Long live the Emperor! Down with the Representatives!"

Too late, Napoleon realized the truth. He had made a mistake in failing to rely on the people.

When he had finished dictating the instrument of his abdication, Lucien and Carnot expressed their surprise. They pointed out to him that he had made no mention of his son. Surely it was essential to keep the Bourbons off the throne?

Napoleon shook his head. He could measure his own impotence and the strength of the traitors who had brought about his downfall.

"The Bourbons?" he said. "Well, at least they won't be under Austria's thumb."

Bitterly, he added:

"They're worth more than my son. They're French, anyway."

But Lucien and Carnot were insistent. If Napoleon abdicated, he must do so in favor of the King of Rome. He himself could not deprive his son of the inheritance which was his due.

Napoleon resigned himself to accept their arguments. He proceeded with his dictation.

"My political life is ended. I proclaim my son Emperor of the French under the title of Napoleon II. . . ."

Faced with Napoleon's instrument of abdication, the House of Representatives debated the situation feverishly for two days. After a heated intervention on Napoleon's behalf by Boulay de la Meurthe, the House, on Manuel's motion, passed a resolution in favor of a regency. On the same day, the House of Peers passed an identical resolution.

On June 24th, a government commission proclaimed Napoleon II Emperor of the French. The next day, official proclamations announced the new Emperor's accession.

The army shouted enthusiastically in his favor. The populace spat at the name of the Bourbons, who were universally loathed.

But the younger Napoleon was missing from these demonstrations in his favor. The Austrian eagle had him firmly in its grip.

One of the members of the House of Representatives, Perrières, proposed that a deputation should be sent to the Emperor Francis to demand that he should restore Napoleon II to France.

Meanwhile Fouché bent down his long, cadaverous face to sniff the prospect of a regency. He did not like the smell of it. He faced about, flattered everybody, smiled at everybody, approved of everything, and made a mess of everything. Thus he gained time, of which he took ad-

vantage to negotiate with Louis XVIII, through the medium of Wellington, for a place in the Bourbons' next administration.

So the enemy armies had plenty of leisure to reorganize themselves and concentrate on Paris. The city's surrender became inevitable. It took place on July 3rd. On July 7th, a decree of the provisional government pronounced a dissolution of Parliament, and two days later Louis XVIII re-entered his capital.

For thirteen days, the little prisoner at Schönbrunn had been, unknown to himself, Emperor of the French.

He was not to know it until much later. Then he was to suffer for it. It was to be the death of him....

A helpless boy of four and a half, he played, ate and slept with no idea that his name filled the world, and that he was the nightmare of Kings, Courts and Chancelleries. He did not know that his fair head was feared as though it were a bomb which might blow up Europe. In the eyes of Metternich, his jailer who kept in the background, he was a kind of hidden cancer which, if allowed to develop, would eat away the Austrian Chancellor's whole political system.

Little Napoleon must be put out of harm's way. Metternich devoted himself to doing so. As early as January 3rd, 1815, Austria signed a secret treaty by which she undertook never to grant the young prince any state of sovereignty. Two days later, at a tea-party given by Marie Louise, the young archdukes played at drawing lots to see who should be king, and, by an ironical coincidence, kingship fell to the little exile.

His new governess, Madame Mitrowski, who was soon to become Countess Scarampi, was much taken up by her duties as lady-in-waiting, and paid little attention to him.

It was Madame Soufflot, her daughter, and good Madame Marchand who took care of him and supervised his education. They kept the memory of his father alive in him. They talked to him about Paris, the Tuileries and Saint Cloud. They proclaimed him Emperor, and the delighted boy clapped his hands and flung his arms round their necks.

When it was fine, he went out driving with little Gobereau, or gardened with him in the park. Sometimes they fought and had to be separated. But at other times the valet's son recalled the respect which was due to the great. When his illustrious playmate was going to be put to bed and he took leave of him, he would stammer:

"I hope you will sleep well, Prince. Permit me to kiss Your Imperial Highness's hand...."

These pompous words amused little Napoleon very much. He would slap his hands together and chuckle:

"Emile can't keep it in. Here he is at his litany again."

Before he went to bed, they sat him on a little chair, and Madame Marchand did his hair, putting it into a score of curling-papers. This operation took time, and made the boy impatient.

"Oh," he exclaimed once, "why don't you cut my hair short like that of other boys?"

To keep him quiet, Fanny Soufflot, sitting on a stool at his feet, read him *Perrault's Fairy-tales* or *Robinson Crusoe.*

He was hasty and hot-tempered, and could ill endure discipline and restraint.

"You are the nastiest woman in the world!" he would tell his governess when she would not let him eat any more cake.

Already he showed some repugnance for systematic study. He was conscious of the fact.

"I'm getting lazier and lazier," he said, "and I ought not to be like that."

He liked talking about his father with the Frenchwomen who took care of him. When the Austrian Emperor left Vienna for Paris after Waterloo, little Napoleon kissed him and said:

"Dear Grandpapa, you won't do any harm to Papa, will you?"

His fidelity to his father could not fail to cause Metternich concern. It must be eradicated at the earliest possible moment. The Chancellor had taken the boy's body prisoner. He must now make his soul prisoner as well. It might be a hard task, it might take some time; but Metternich meant to do it, and he had adequate means at hand.

To be sure, memory was a tenacious growth in a child. A firm hand would be needed to dig up every root of it.

Already, at Metternich's orders, the boy had gradually been deprived of everything that might remind him of France and the part which he had played there. One day it was his French wooden soldiers. Another day it was his broad ribbon of the Legion of Honor, which was replaced by the Order of St. Stephen. Then there disappeared an illustrated book, entitled *The Glories of France,* which reproduced engravings bearing witness to Napoleon's victories and achievements. For months the boy asked for its return, but in vain.

Metternich realized the power of education. He was conscious of the bad influence over the prince which was exercised by the Frenchwomen who still surrounded him. The Chancellor's first step was to put the young prince under masculine control.

On the advice of Hager, the Minister of Police, his choice fell on Count Maurice Dietrichstein.

Aged forty, Dietrichstein belonged to one of the leading families in Austria. He was an ex-officer and a man of cultivated mind, a patron of Beethoven, controller of

music at Court and director of the Hoftheater. He seemed to combine all the requisite qualifications.

Marie Louise approved of his choice as the prince's tutor, the Emperor appointed him, and on June 30th, 1815, he presented himself at the boy's apartments in the Hofburg to take over his duties.

But little Napoleon flatly refused to be introduced to his tutor. When Madame Scarampi insisted, he declared:

"I won't go into the drawing-room!"

"But why not, Prince?"

"Because I don't like the chamberlain who's in there. He wants to teach me things. . . . He's a bad man."

Madame Scarampi had to take him along almost by force. Once in Count Dietrichstein's presence, the boy remained as solemn as a young cock, and refused to open his lips.

Their very first lessons revealed variance between the tutor and his pupil, whose ill-will towards him was obvious. Nevertheless, Count Dietrichstein went on with his task. Conscientiously, he drew up a whole scheme of education for the boy, and submitted it to Marie Louise.

The tutor honestly believed that it would be to the boy's advantage to turn him into an Austrian prince. For his own good, it was essential to detach him entirely from his past, which meant only ruin, misfortune and bad example. Dietrichstein, to be sure, was not in favor of making little Napoleon forget his father's history. On the contrary, that history should serve as a salutary lesson for him, restrain his ambition, and disgust him with sovereignty. Dietrichstein wrote to Marie Louise:

> "It seems to me that the prince with whose education I have been honored should be considered as being of Austrian descent and be brought up on German lines. His education will require much attention."

Marie Louise could not fail to applaud his plans. On September 2nd, 1815, she wrote to Madame de Montebello:

> "I want him to be turned into a completely German prince. . . . It must be his own talents, his own brains, his own worth which make a name for him; for the name which he bears by birth is unhappily the reverse of a fine one."

So she hastened to satisfy Dietrichstein when he demanded the immediate dismissal of little Napoleon's Frenchwomen. On September 19th, Madame Soufflot and her daughter Fanny were dismissed.

When he heard the news, the boy cried and flew into a rage. Captain Foresti had been appointed as Dietrichstein's assistant to teach him mathematics and German. In Foresti's presence, little Napoleon said to Madame Soufflot:

"Toto, stay till the end of the week. And then stay till the end of next week. And then stay till the end of the world. Can't we fool them like that?"

But the hour of separation came. The two women could not conceal their grief. The boy wept with them. Impotent to comfort them or do anything else for them, he went and fetched an armful of his toys and offered them to Fanny.

"Look, Toto, I'm going to give you these. . . ."

He wanted them to take away with them all the finest things he had, all the things he loved best: his little gun, his French decorations, the medallions which had been struck to celebrate his birth, his coral rattle, his baptismal veil.

"Take this," he said, "and this, too. . . ."

When Madame Soufflot and her daughter had gone, the only Frenchwoman left with him was Madame Marchand, his dear "Chanchan." Her maternal care was still essential

to him. Dietrichstein thought her harmless, and shrank from the cruelty of inflicting further grief on the boy. So a respite of a few months was granted to his humble nurse.

During all this time, Marie Louise had lived in mortal terror. She did not breathe freely again until she heard that Louis XVIII was safely back on his throne in Paris.

By way of relaxing and recovering her taste for life, she decided to go and take the waters at Baden, three leagues from Vienna. To be sure, she would miss Neipperg just as much there; but the atmosphere of Baden was less stifling than that of Schönbrunn.

Music, painting and riding horseback took up most of her time. On Sundays, she went to Mass in great state, with visitors to the watering-place lining the road. Preceded by Bausset, clad all in black and solemn as a sacristan, she made her triumphal progress looking like a rose in full bloom, in a rose dress, a rose jacket, and a rose hat with a rose feather. If only Neipperg had been there, she would have seen everything rose-colored too.

On August 13th, she experienced perhaps the greatest joy in her life. A letter from Metternich, who was in Paris, informed her that Napoleon was on his way to Saint Helena. Marie Louise heaved a prodigious sigh of relief.

Countess Scarampi, who had heard the news from another source, also sent it to her. Marie Louise replied in a brief note which betrayed her impatience to celebrate the occasion.

"Thank you. I have already heard what you tell me. I feel like going for a ride to Merkenstein this afternoon. I wonder whether it will keep fine."

Still, she felt that she should at least go through the motions of doing something for the man who remained her husband. On August 15th, Napoleon's birthday, she wrote to her father:

> "...I hope that he will be treated kindly and leniently, and I beg you, my beloved Papa, to use your influence in this direction. This is the sole request which I permit myself to make to you, and this is the last time I shall interest myself in his fate. After all, I owe him a certain amount of gratitude for letting me live in the calm of indifference, instead of trying to make me unhappy."

Henceforth her Corsican husband ceased to exist for her. If he had been six feet underground, he could not have been more completely effaced from her life.

Of her love-affair with Napoleon, but one memory remained: her son. But the part her son played in her life was such a small one. Besides, the people around her exerted themselves to make him play a still smaller part; and docile Marie Louise let them have their way.

On August 21st, Metternich informed her that she could not take the little prince with her to Parma. Marie Louise did not worry about that. Only one person now counted in her life: Neipperg.

How she missed him, that fine soldier who had covered himself with glory by defeating Murat! How slow he was in enjoying the reward which all his doughty deeds had earned from her!

Back at Schönbrunn, Marie Louise languished in the absence of her true knight. On December 2nd, her entourage staged a little festivity to celebrate her birthday.

"Ah, if only he were here!" she sighed.

All at once—oh, joyful surprise!—he was announced. He had reached Vienna from Venice in three days, traveling day and night. He was in her arms. He was in her bed. . . .

It was exactly seven weeks since Napoleon had landed in Saint Helena. He had just left The Briars and taken up his residence at Longwood: a tumbledown house beaten by an endless wind.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE OUTLAW

At dawn on July 15th, Napoleon's valet, Marchand, had helped his master to don the uniform of a colonel in the light infantry of the Guard, and handed Napoleon his little hat and his sword. With his suite and his baggage, Napoleon embarked on the brig *Epervier.* At six o'clock, he boarded the English ship *Bellerophon.* When he reached the quarter-deck, he saluted Captain Maitland and said to him:

"Captain, I have come to place myself under the protection of your Sovereign and your laws."

No honors were paid to him. Meanwhile the *Epervier,* flying the tricolor, sailed away again, still ringing with cheers and shouts of farewell.

On July 24th, 1815, the *Bellerophon* dropped anchor in Torbay roadstead, off Dartmouth. The day before, off Ouessant, Napoleon had sighted the soil of France through the mist for the last time. With his eye glued to the telescope which he had used at Austerlitz, he gazed long and longingly at the coast. Then, when the mist hid it from him, he let his arms drop heavily at his sides. Grand Marshal Bertrand had to help him to his cabin....

In Torbay roadstead an unpleasant surprise awaited Napoleon. By order of the English government, nobody was allowed on board the ship which carried him. He

realized that he had fallen into a trap. England was preparing to treat him not as a guest, but as a prisoner.

Finding that Napoleon's presence off Dartmouth aroused undesirable curiosity, Lord Liverpool, the English Prime Minister, took alarm and ordered the *Bellerophon's* captain to proceed to the naval port of Plymouth. The *Bellerophon* reached there on July 26th.

In accordance with the government's instructions, Napoleon promptly found himself subjected to stricter guard. He was isolated from all the officers of his suite below the rank of general. At the same time, it was intimated to him that henceforth his right to the title of Emperor would not be recognized. He would be merely General Bonaparte, and be treated as such.

On July 31st, Admiral Lord Keith, commander-in-chief of the English fleet, and Sir Henry Bunbry, Under-Secretary of State, boarded the *Bellerophon* and informed Napoleon of the decision which the English government had taken regarding him.

In order to put him beyond reach of disturbing the peace of Europe again, he was to be transported to the island of Saint Helena. He would be allowed to take with him three officers, chosen by himself, and twelve servants.

Napoleon received this sentence with a face set like a statue's. Nevertheless, he protested against the English government's breach of its pledged word.

"Your Government," he said, "is violating the time-honored right of refuge to my disadvantage. I appeal from its decision to England's sense of honor. . . ."

A little later, he said to Maitland:

"So I am to be exiled to Saint Helena? This is worse than Tamerlane's iron cage. They might as well have signed my death-warrant at once."

For that matter, his faith in the English people's sense

of honor was justified. Public opinion was aroused against the fate which awaited him. Strong protests were lodged against the injustice of which he was being made the victim, and in several directions efforts were made to invoke *habeas corpus* in his favor.

Every day sightseers flocked to Plymouth in the hope of catching a glimpse of "Boney," whom English caricaturists had immortalized. The roadstead was full of boats trying, at the risk of capsizing, to approach the ship on board which the Eagle was held prisoner.

All this excitement filled the English Prime Minister with renewed concern. He ordered the *Bellerophon* to cruise offshore pending the arrival of the *Northumberland*, which was to carry the ex-Emperor to Saint Helena.

The *Bellerophon* sailed from Plymouth on August 4th. On August 5th, while she was at sea, Napoleon addressed to Lord Keith a further letter of protest. It was like a poisoned arrow stuck in England's side.

> "Here, before Heaven and mankind, I solemnly protest against the violence which has been done to me, and against the violation of my most sacred rights.... I am not England's prisoner; I am England's guest.... If the English government, when it ordered the *Bellerophon's* captain to take me and my suite on board, meant only to lay a trap for me, it has forfeited its honor and besmirched its flag....
>
> "I appeal from it to the judgment of history...."

During the morning of August 6th, a big ship under full sail and escorted by two frigates appeared on the horizon. She was the *Northumberland*.

Rear-Admiral Sir George Cockburn, who had been detailed to escort Napoleon to Saint Helena, presented him-

self to the prisoner. He transmitted to Napoleon the orders which he had received from his government.

All the French officers must hand over their arms, with the exception of General Bonaparte, who was authorized to retain his sword. Napoleon's belongings and baggage were subjected to examination. His money, his jewelry, his negotiable securities were taken away from him. He was informed that if he made any attempt to escape, he would be put in irons.

The time for farewells forever had come.

After much negotiation, the English government had authorized five officers to accompany Napoleon: Grand Marshal Bertrand, General de Montholon, General Gourgaud, Count de Las Cases and his son. These officers were transferred to the *Northumberland.* Madame Bertrand, Madame de Montholon and the servants followed them.

Corvisart had chosen Doctor Maingaud to accompany Napoleon to Saint Helena; but Maingaud refused to go. The *Bellerophon's* surgeon, O'Meara, agreed to take his place, and joined the party of exiles.

Napoleon made his farewells. He embraced Savary and General Lallemand. They were in tears, aghast at the thought that this parting might mean a sentence of death for them; for the English government talked about sending them back to France, and there the scaffold awaited them.

Then Napoleon took his leave of Maitland and the *Bellerophon's* officers. He walked between the ranks of the crew, standing at attention. His face was pale, and two days' growth of beard bristled on his cheeks and chin. His eyes were the same steel-gray as the sea, heaving under a somber sky.

He descended the ship's side into one of her boats, and sat down in it with his head bowed. Aboard the *Beller-*

ophon, his friends waved their hands to him; but he spared himself further suffering by refusing to look at them. At two o'clock in the afternoon he boarded the *Northumberland.*

On August 8th, 1815, the big ship, carrying over one thousand souls, weighed anchor, flying Admiral Cockburn's flag. Escorted by a frigate, two transports and five brigs, a whole squadron, she set her course southwards.

Beaten by the waves, blanketed by mist or burned by the sun, the *Northumberland* pursued her endlessly long voyage. Time hung heavy....

Napoleon bowed to the discipline which the English officers imposed upon him: no longer Emperor, but merely General Bonaparte. In the morning, he dictated a record of his campaigns to Las Cases. In the afternoon, he paced the deck with Bertrand, Gourgaud or Montholon, or sat on a cannon and listened to the whistling of the wind in the shrouds, the creaking of the sails, the groaning of the heavy vessel as she met the waves, the song of the look-out man in the fore-top. A seagull's flight entertained him for a few moments. Then he watched the gambols of Bertrand's and Montholon's children as they played with the admiral's Newfoundland dog.

The ship sighted Madeira. She crossed the tropic of Cancer, and then the Equator. Instead of the nor'easter, there was the trade-wind. Instead of fog, there was overwhelming heat. By now sharks followed the ship. In the evening, the sun seemed to sink into the sea like an incandescent globe, sending up phosphorescent rays. After nightfall, the ship plowed her way through a field of fire.

Standing at the prow, with his face uplifted to the sky, Napoleon watched the rise of stars hitherto unknown to him. Around him a whole new world was coming to birth, full of unfriendly forces. He entered it weakened

and shrunken, with no weapons other than his will, his courage and his memories.

Tired of plumbing the night, he bowed his head. In this sky where the Southern Cross lorded it, there was no room for his star....

Slowly Napoleon made his way to his cabin. There he found what was now the dearest thing he had in the world: his collection of portraits of his son. They were the miniatures painted by Isabey and Aimée Thibault. To save them from the rolling of the ship, Napoleon's valet, Marchand, had fixed them in a little frame.

Here was the boy asleep in his cot. Here he was sitting on his sheep. Here he was trying on a slipper. Here he was praying to God for his father and for France. Here, finally, he was in his mother's arms.

Napoleon parted the green taffeta curtains and sat down on his little iron bedstead. With his eyes gazing at his son's face, he fell to dreaming. His mind fled from the cabin, with its reek of tar and brine. It escaped from the ship, with its heaving, creaking timbers.

Paris... the Empire... Europe.... One hundred and thirty thousand subjects.... Marie Louise.... The King of Rome....

Napoleon sat up. Of all his past as an Emperor, nothing was left to him but a few portraits of a boy. It was with them that he must live out the rest of his life. He knew now that he could have made no better choice.

On the morning of October 15th, Napoleon came out on deck. As soon as he set foot on it, he stepped back, as though to avoid being crushed.

Before him rose a high black wall, overwhelmed by dark clouds. Fifteen hundred feet of basalt plunged sheer into the sea, which boiled and foamed in endless fury.

The cliffs were bare, bleak, hostile. Nothing grew on them but cannon, which seemed the savage soul of them.

Beneath this monstrous citadel of lava opened a creek which looked like the gate of Hell. Around it huddled a handful of yellow houses. Nothing stirred. There seemed to be no life anywhere. . . .

It was sixty-eight days since the *Northumberland* had sailed from Torbay; and this was Saint Helena. . . .

CHAPTER XXXIV

"I WANT TO BE FRENCH"

MARIE LOUISE had handed her son over to her father. She was in agreement with him, with Metternich and with everybody else about turning the boy into an Austrian prince. It was obviously the right thing to do, for his own best interests. He had nothing more to expect from the Bonapartes, scattered to the four corners of the world like a crowd of crows dispersed by a storm. But Austria could give Napoleon's son a title, a fief, honors.

In the month of February, Madame Marchand, the sole Frenchwoman still left with the young prince, received her dismissal. She had never left him from his birth. She dressed him, fed him and put him to sleep at night by singing him old French songs. Sometimes she amused him by talking to him about his father. She did so in the emotional strain of a simple woman who had made a god of him.

Little Napoleon knew that Madame Marchand was obedient to his every whim, and he abused his privileges a little. When she refused to let him have any more sweets, of which he was fond, he used to fling himself upon her and pummel her.

One day, red with wrath as a little cock, he stormed at her:

"Chanchan, you are a horrid woman, the nastiest woman

in the world! I'll ask my grandpapa to put you in prison or send you back to Paris...."

He need not trouble. Others had thought of it for him.

On February 27th, 1816, Madame Marchand did his hair for him, set it into its curling-papers, got him to say his prayers, and put him to bed, all as usual. When he was asleep, she gazed at him for a long time, with large tears running down her cheeks. Then she rose to her feet and rushed away, holding her handkerchief to her mouth to stifle her sobs.

The next morning, the boy awakened at his normal time. Beside him, lying in the bed in which Madame Marchand used to sleep, he saw Captain Foresti, his assistant-tutor. He opened his eyes wide. He understood. He bit his lips. With difficulty, he managed not to cry.

"Herr Foresti," he said, at length, "can I get up?"

Henceforth he was to have no woman near him. He was to have no gentle hands to caress him, no bosom on which to take refuge when he was unhappy. That was all over. He was no longer to enjoy the affection which is childhood's right....

To watch over him, to understand him, to awaken his mind to life, there were to be only men; and these men were strangers to him, who had orders to carry out, a duty to perform. They devoted themselves to it with no unkindliness, to be sure, but at the same time with a strictness which left no room for weakness or concession.

Marie Louise set off for Parma on March 7th, 1816, taking her Neipperg with her, and also little Gobereau. Her son was left alone with his tutors, Count Dietrichstein and Captain Foresti. With them were associated Matthew von Collin, professor of philosophy at the University of Vienna, and, to teach the boy writing, Professor Mayer,

THE KING OF ROME

From the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A., in the collection of Viscount Esher

teacher of calligraphy at the School of Higher Technical Education.

Difficulties arose at once. The boy refused to learn German.

"I don't want to be German," he cried, stamping his foot on the ground. "I want to be French."

His tutors were insistent, but he remained stubborn. They reprimanded him. He listened to their lectures tight-lipped, without weakening. They punished him. Still he refused to give way. His mother had to intervene before he would make any concession. Even so, at the outset he persisted in answering in French when he was addressed in German.

He lost his temper easily, tore his copy-books and spoilt his text-books. To annoy Foresti, he shouted at the top of his voice soldiers' and grooms' swear-words which he had picked up from Emile Gobereau.

He stifled under the constraint which was imposed upon him. Once all his heart rose to his lips.

"Ah," he said to Foresti, "how happy I was before I knew you and when Toto was still with me!"

He was wideawake and quick in answer. One day, at the Imperial table, the Archduke Anthony told him that he would give him a ride on one of the lion-cubs which had just been born at the Schönbrunn Zoo.

"All right, Uncle," he replied, promptly, "you have a ride first, and then it will be my turn."

If he showed little taste for study, on the contrary he had a very keen aptitude for military exercises and warfare. For fun, Matthew von Collin asked him what, according to him, a general ought to know.

"Oh, not much," he replied, readily, "just how to train his soldiers, how to make them march, and a bit of reckoning. . . ."

With his eyes alight, he raised his little hand, as he was in the habit of doing when he wanted to emphasize something, and added:

"That's the truth!"

Still, he was prudent. He told Foresti:

"I want to be a soldier, but I don't want to get killed. I'd have a whole regiment marching in front of me to protect me from the bullets."

He used to be carefree and cheerful. Now he became reserved and distrustful. He was naturally affectionate, and he would have been only too glad to open his heart; but to whom could he do it? He felt that he was no longer loved, but always watched, always spied upon. He retired into himself, and took refuge behind craft and deceit.

Confusedly, he realized that something was being kept from him. His instinct rebelled and kept him constantly on the defensive.

He was only five, and he was all alone in his struggle against the people who wanted to rob him of the picture of his past which he carried within him. To help him in this fight, he had only his childish memories, which life disintegrates little by little, just as a torrent nibbles away its banks as it swells.

Attack was first directed against the things around him: his toys, his linen, his clothes. The eagle and the royal crown with which they were marked were removed.

Then the Emperor decided that he should not be called Napoleon any longer. He was to be known as Franz, the German version of his second name, François. At first the boy protested and turned a deaf ear when he was addressed as Franz. Then, little by little, he got used to it.

But pictures of his childhood, of the soft sky of the Ile-de-France, still remained vivid in his mind.

"Ah, if only I were in Paris!" he often exclaimed.

One day he was out for a walk with Foresti and little Gobereau. His playmate asked the captain:

"Are we on the high road to Paris?"

"No," replied Foresti, "we're almost back at the palace."

"Ah," cried the prince, "how I wish it were Paris, really and truly Paris! Ah, how I wish it were! . . ."

Another day, when birch-trees were discussed in a lesson, he asked:

"Don't they come from the Bois de Boulogne, just outside Paris? I still remember it so well. I often used to go there for a drive."

Once, when he was playing soldiers with Emile Gobereau, he suddenly exclaimed:

"When the Austrians entered Paris, everybody shouted: 'Shut up your shops!' "

But, above all, the memory of his father haunted him. He was allowed to pray for him. He recited: "Our Father, Who art in Heaven. . . ." But where was his own father? Why didn't he come? Why did nobody ever say anything about him?

All this mystery served to darken his memory of his father's beloved face. The boy struggled against this darkness, which every day became more dense. If he mentioned his father's name, he saw heads turn away, lips tighten, eyes fill with scorn and hatred. Nevertheless, he persisted. His grandfather once gave him a pony. The boy felt humiliated.

"I want a big horse," he cried, "a big horse like Papa's, when he went to war."

Soon after Waterloo, he said to Dietrichstein:

"My father would have done better to make himself King of Corsica than King of France. . . . And I think my dear Mamma would have done better not to marry my

father. She ought to have married one of my uncles."

Sometimes he managed to put awkward questions to his tutors. In the month of July 1816, while he was out for a walk, he expressed astonishment that he no longer had any pages, as he used to have in Paris. Then, all at once, he asked Foresti:

"Who's Emperor of France now?"

"There isn't an Emperor any more. France is ruled by a King. His name is Louis XVIII."

"But I know that before him an Emperor ruled over France. Who was he?"

"He was your father," Foresti admitted, in some embarrassment. Then he added:

"He lost his crown and his empire because of his unhappy fondness for war."

"I know," replied the boy. "He fought great battles. I read all about them in a book, *The Glories of France*."

He thought for a moment or two, and then, in an anxious little voice, he asked:

"If he caused all that trouble, was my dear Papa a bad man?"

Like a decent fellow, Foresti cut the conversation short.

"It isn't for you to judge your father, Prince," he said. "Just go on loving him and praying for him."

The boy's tutors felt that it was no longer possible to conceal Napoleon's history from him. Dietrichstein referred the question to the Emperor. He decided that the truth must be the basis of the boy's education, and thought that it would be best to answer all his questions honestly. This would avoid over-excitement of his imagination, which might be dangerous. Marie Louise was consulted and agreed, though dubiously.

Indeed, of all the members of the Imperial family, it was the Emperor who took the most affectionate interest

in the young prince. Since the still recent death of his wife, Maria Ludovica, on April 7th, 1816, the Emperor had concerned himself about the boy considerably.

It may have been through remorse for letting Metternich do the boy so much harm. It may have been by way of compensating him. It may have been just because he found him the best looking and the most intelligent of all his grandsons. In any case, the Emperor showed a marked preference for Franz.

At Schönbrunn he saw him every day. In the winter, when he was in residence at the Hofburg, the boy was brought to him several times a week. They had lunch together, and then the Emperor took the boy into his study with him. If he was very good, he was allowed to put on a little infantryman's uniform, carry a little musket, mount guard at the door of the Emperor's study, and present arms to the officers.

But usually he stayed in the study with his grandfather. On the Emperor's desk stood the portrait of the boy by Isabey which Marie Louise had sent him. It represented him sitting on a cloud, with the broad ribbon of the Legion of Honor across his breast.

"That's me, isn't it, Grandpapa?" asked the boy, one day.

"Yes, Franz."

"That was when I was King of Rome, wasn't it?"

"Quite so."

"Then does Rome belong to me?"

Patiently, the Emperor explained to him that it was only a title. The Emperor himself had the title of King of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem didn't belong to him.

"Oh, I see," said Franz; but he found the point too subtle for him.

He sat down on the floor and played with his wooden

soldiers, keeping very quiet. From time to time, he raised his head and gazed at his grandfather. The Emperor was signing official documents: decrees, edicts, commissions. Then he took a stick of sealing-wax, which he was in the habit of making personally, and sealed the envelopes with an artistry whose perfection was the admiration of every Court and chancellery in Europe.

The boy studied his long, rather red face, with its network of lines; his thick, loose, colorless lips, and his delicate white hands, lingering childishly over his finical task. Finally the Emperor became conscious that his grandson's eyes were fixed on him. He looked around.

"What are you thinking about, Franz?"

"Oh, nothing, Grandpapa...."

How could he say what he was thinking about? How could he say that he imagined himself in another study, like this one, but in the Tuileries....

In it moved about a man full of life, with shining eyes. He never sat still. He walked up and down, took the boy up in his arms, tossed him up in the air, caught him again, rolled about on the floor with him. He made him laugh. He covered him with kisses....

The memory made the boy feel all aglow. Then he felt a sudden chill. Wearily he returned to his soldiers.

Time went on. Darkness came in through the double windows, whose greenish glass cut off half the daylight at any time. A footman brought in a big oil lamp. Another refueled the tall earthenware stove which purred in a corner of the room. The clock on the mantelpiece struck, and it was echoed by the cadence of chimes in the chilly mist that hung over Vienna. The atmosphere was heavy with the smell of wax. The boy felt sleepy.

"What's the matter, Franz?" asked the Emperor.

"I just don't want to play any more, Grandpapa," replied the boy.

When Marie Louise set off for Parma at the beginning of March, she had obediently agreed to everything that was required of her.

"The boy must remain here," her father declared. Marie Louise was far from insisting upon taking him with her. He would soon become an embarrassing witness of her fresh love-affair.

She was also to abandon her title of Empress, and to be known henceforth as Her Majesty the Archduchess Marie Louise of Austria, Duchess of Parma. Finally, she was requested to dismiss her French suite, headed by Bausset, without delay, and to hand over to her father the portrait which Gérard had painted of her as Empress.

On the other hand, she could take Neipperg with her. That compensated her for everything else.

In Italy she was well received; but her journey was fertile in incidents. One evening in Verona she went to the theater incognito. But the audience discovered her, despite her efforts to make herself small at the back of her box. Promptly shouts went up:

"Long live the Empress Marie Louise! Long live Napoleon II!"

The police were powerless to quell the enthusiasm. The duchess had to leave the theater. She returned home amid the cheers of a delirious populace.

While she was settling down at Parma, in Vienna the question of succession to the duchy of which she had taken possession was being discussed. Everybody in Europe was at least agreed on this point: not at any price should Napoleon's son succeed his mother. Marie Louise was consulted, merely as a matter of form. She protested feebly, and then,

on the advice of her lover, agreed to any arrangement that might be made.

Meanwhile she led a gay life in her duchy. At the beginning of the summer, finding the heat in Parma overwhelming, she went to Livorno to be cooler. At the end of August she proceeded to Florence. Thence she went on to Bologna, where she paid a visit to the picture-gallery. But once more she was recognized. A crowd flocked around her carriage, shouting:

"Long live Napoleon the Great! Long live his unhappy wife!"

Officers at the door joined in the refrain:

"Long live your husband! Long live your husband!"

Marie Louise had to make her escape from the gallery by a back door.

"These vile people of Bologna!" she exclaimed, full of rage and disgust. "They have stopped me from seeing what I wanted to see in the town."

To avoid all these hateful manifestations of sympathy, she hastened to return to Colorno, her summer residence. In addition, a more imperious reason precipitated her return.

Neipperg had done valiantly. He had achieved something startling. He had got the wife of Napoleon, Emperor of the French, in the family way.

CHAPTER XXXV
THE PRISONER

ON the strength of books, Napoleon expected to find Saint Helena an earthly paradise. Instead of meadows, woods, flowers and fountains, he found a rock riddled by ravines. To this rock he was to be chained, with England in the role of vulture.

After staying for a month and a half at the Briars, at the beginning of December he was transferred to Longwood. The path which led there wound between precipices a thousand feet deep. As Napoleon ascended, the soil became more sterile and vegetation more meager. Except where there was some shelter from the terrible wind that blew from the south-east, nothing was to be seen but brushwood and barren rock.

Some fifteen hundred feet above sea-level, on the side of the island away from the wind, extended a wide plateau, covered with sickly, yellowish grass on which rickety sheep browsed. A few dwarf gum-trees leant the opposite way from the blasts that swept in from the sea. To the right was the dark mass of The Barn, and to the left Diana's Peak. When the wind stopped blowing, a mist rose from the sea which plunged everything and everybody into overwhelming humidity.

In the midst of this landscape stood a kind of farm

house, consisting of one story, with a loft above it. Beside it stood some outhouses. Such was Longwood.

Here about fifty people had to find shelter in five barely habitable rooms. The chimneys smoked, damp oozed from the walls, and beneath the floor, almost flush with the ground, lurked an army of rats, which came out to gambol at night. Drinking water had to be fetched from a fountain twelve hundred yards away.

Though Napoleon was imprisoned on an island guarded by stormy seas two thousand leagues away from Europe, England still trembled lest he might escape. So she took her precautions. The peaks of Saint Helena bristled with look-out men raking the horizon. A squadron cruised round the island. Six hundred cannon were ready to open fire on any attackers. A complete garrison, amounting to nearly three thousand officers and men, was judged necessary to deprive a single man of his freedom.

But, beaten, scorned, treated as a criminal though he was, Napoleon stood up to adversity. England might have chained him to a rock, Europe might have robbed him of his crown: he rose above insult and injustice. He was no rebel, he was no adventurer, and the handful of princes whom he had whipped a score of times had no right to pronounce him dethroned. He remained the Emperor, the Emperor chosen and crowned by the French people. He had his throne from the nation, and nobody else could deprive him of it.

The English had imagined that calling him General Bonaparte would suffice for the purpose. It was no such easy matter.

By way of reminding them that they were still dealing with Napoleon, whose boots kings had licked, he surrounded himself with the same ceremonial as at the Tuileries. Etiquette was at once his weapon and his armor.

It forced his jailers always to remember who he was....

In this tumbledown house, amid dilapidated furniture and rickety chairs, he assembled the remnants of his former pomp around him and entrenched himself behind them. The dignity of his bearing, the flash of his eyes, compensated for the sordidness of his setting, and his jailers when they approached him were constrained, despite themselves, to feel something like respect for him.

Noverraz had been promoted to the rank of usher. When he opened the drawing-room door, everybody thrilled as, in a ringing voice, he announced:

"The Emperor!"

Napoleon's line of conduct as an outlaw was dictated by the one idea which still linked him to life. The sufferings he endured, which could end only with his death, must some day enable his son to win back the throne of France.

"Only my martyrdom," he declared, "can now restore the throne of France to my dynasty."

His attitude was Christlike. He wanted his son to know that he had had a father who always rose above his misfortunes. So, in order to keep his halo intact, he was ready to bear any torture which was inflicted upon him without complaint, without lowering himself to prayer and lamentation.

He thought only about his son; but he talked about him as little as possible. When he did mention his name, it was with an outburst of hope.

"My son will reign for me," he said.

He had asked the English for news of Marie Louise and the King of Rome in vain. Now he knew where he stood. His son was dead to him in this world. He lived on only in his heart. Henceforth he could count only on his memory to nurture the picture that was so dear to him.

But sometimes he found the burden too heavy, and for a moment he faltered.

Once he pointed out to a visitor the marble bust which stood on the mantelpiece in his room.

"That's my son," he said. "That's all they have left me of him."

One morning, after dressing, he took from his pocket a snuffbox, on which a miniature of the King of Rome was painted. He gazed at it for some time. Then, all at once, he handed it to Marchand, his valet.

"Lock it away," he said. "I can't have it always before my eyes. It hurts me too much."

During the first few months of his captivity, Napoleon had maintained fairly good relations with Colonel Wilkes, the governor of the island.

But in the month of April 1816, Wilkes was replaced by Lieutenant-General Hudson Lowe, who had been carefully chosen by the English government for the job. Then things took a turn for the worse and developed into tragedy.

Hudson Lowe was a ginger-haired little man, with deep-set eyes and a pointed chin. He had a narrow, suspicious mind, and the petty, sneaking soul of the born jailer.

The importance of his responsibility haunted him day and night. The idea that his prisoner might escape robbed him of his sleep and his appetite. He rushed about his island in a state of excitement which the least incident transformed into fury.

Such incidents arose within the first few weeks of his governorship. Lowe redoubled sentries, orders and restrictions.

In Europe he had once commanded a regiment of Corsicans in rebellion against France. The choice of such an

officer as governor could scarcely predispose Napoleon in his favor.

Lowe had arrived in Saint Helena with definite instructions from his government. Their secret object was to isolate Napoleon by separating him from his servants. Lowe's first action was to demand from all the Emperor's companions a written undertaking, in which they declared that they remained in Saint Helena of their own free will, and that they would submit to any restrictions which might be imposed on "Napoleon Boneparte." If they refused to sign this undertaking, they would be sent to the Cape of Good Hope and thence to Europe.

One day, at the beginning of May 1816, Napoleon received a visit from Lowe, who came to suggest the building of additional rooms at Longwood. The governor, thinking he was doing the right thing, invited Napoleon to dinner. Napoleon—who had not invited him to sit down—spat at him:

"Have you come here to torment me? Is this how you propose to treat me? It is an insult for you to invite me to dinner. It is an insult for you to call me General Bonaparte. I am the Emperor Napoleon!"

A month later, a piece of news brought the prisoner a little hope. The arrival of the frigate *Newcastle* and the *Orontes* was announced. These ships carried the three commissioners whom, by virtue of the treaty of August 2nd, 1815, Russia, Austria and France were authorized to send to Saint Helena to satisfy themselves that Napoleon could not escape.

In these travelers Napoleon naïvely saw Ministers from the sovereigns of Europe were accrediting to his person. Through them he could resume contact with the civilized world and make known in what manner the English dared to treat him.

He was soon to find out his mistake. The envoys had been sent only to report to their masters how the wild beast whom they feared so much was behaving in his cage. Lowe was his tamer, and the commissioners looked on at a respectful distance, eager to know how the beast reacted to the lash.

Meanwhile Napoleon hoped that Baron Stürmer, the Austrian commissioner, would bring him news of his wife and his son. The travelers had landed on June 18th. Some days went by, and Napoleon saw nothing of them. Then it dawned on him that Stürmer and his two colleagues were only additional jailers.

He was prostrated. His suffering redoubled his resentment. He clenched his fists and cried:

"I married the daughter of the Emperor of Austria. He begged me on his knees to marry her. He is a sovereign to whom I twice restored his States. Now he has possession of my wife and my son. Can it be that this man has sent his commissioner here without a line to me, without a single word, without even a scrap of paper to tell me that my son is still alive, without even letting me know how he is? No, there is nothing, nothing at all...."

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE LOCK OF HAIR

It was one day towards the end of June: in other words, the depths of winter in the southern hemisphere. Night was falling. Napoleon retired to his bedroom.

He felt rather tired. During the afternoon, armed with hammer and chisel, he had helped to open some cases of books which Lady Holland had sent by the *Newcastle*.

The arrival of cases from her was always a welcome event for the little French colony. Napoleon had shown more impatience than anybody else to find out what they contained this time. Now that his curiosity was satisfied, he was like a child soon weary of a new toy.

He sat down on his couch, covered with cotton stuff. He was clad in a green cutaway coat with silver buttons, a black cravat, and white dimity breeches. He had put on flesh, and his complexion had gone yellow and lost its luster.

A turf fire burnt behind the bars of the grate, and the atmosphere reeked of damp and smoke.

Napoleon opened the *Odyssey*, and read over again the chapter in which Homer describes the return of Ulysses to Ithaca. At one point he stopped reading, reflected, and murmured:

"Yes, that's good. That's just like human nature."

He listened for a few moments to the loud voices of

wind and sea which merged in the sky. A storm was setting Longwood shaking. Rain drove in gusts against the little sash-windows. Outside, the giant fist of the gale twisted the gum-trees like the hair of women dragged into captivity. Diana's Peak kept on splitting the clouds which ceaselessly reformed to overwhelm it, while creeping mists rolled round its sides, like great snakes coiling round their prey to strangle it.

Napoleon turned his eyes away from this desolation, and fixed them on the things around him.

In front of him, on a screen, hung the portrait which Gérard had painted of Marie Louise holding her baby in her arms. The ornate gilding of its frame clashed with the walls of the room, hung with faded, yellowish nankeen, and with the poverty of the rest of the furniture: the iron bedstead which Napoleon had used during his campaign in France; the cane-seated chairs; the worn carpet; the mahogany table; the silver wash-basin, a last relic of his former greatness.

On the mantelpiece, which was of wood painted gray, Marchand had placed the bust of the King of Rome, together with two silver candlesticks. On either side he had hung on the wall miniatures of the boy; portraits of Josephine and Madame Mère; Frederick II's alarm-clock, a war-trophy taken at Potsdam; and, to balance it, the watch which Napoleon as First Consul had used during his second campaign in Italy.

Napoleon returned to his reading. Through the open door, he could hear his servant Ali arranging the books which Lady Holland had sent on the shelves in the study.

All at once, footsteps rang in the next room, and Marchand came in. His boots were muddied to his knees, and his cloak was streaming with rain. He flung it off, and

revealed his tall, thin figure clad in a green suit trimmed with gold.

"Oh, Sire!" he exclaimed.

Shocked by this grave breach of etiquette, Napoleon looked up at his valet with a stern face.

"What's the matter? What do you mean by breaking in like this? . . ."

Marchand was pale. His handsome face, with its regular features, was drawn with fatigue. He seemed breathless, as though he had been running hard.

"Sire," he said, "forgive me; but I'm so excited! . . ."

His eyes sparkled with the joy in his heart, like a diamond in its setting.

"Well, what's it all about?" asked Napoleon. "Where have you been?"

"To Jamestown, Sire."

"What were you doing there in this weather? Have you gone mad?"

Painfully Marchand found his breath.

"Well," he began, "you know that the Austrian commissioner and his wife landed here a few days ago . . ."

"I don't want to hear anything more about them," Napoleon cut in, angrily.

"I'm sorry, Sire, but I must mention them. Baron Stürmer didn't land all by himself. Apart from his wife, he was accompanied by a young botanist, by the name of Philip Welle. He is officially entrusted with botanical research in the island. He is to take back to Vienna specimens of all the plants and flowers that grow here."

Napoleon had closed his book. He toyed with it absentmindedly. The actions of a rat, which showed its whiskers and one pearly black eye at the edge of a hole near the chest of drawers, between the wall and the floor, seemed to interest him more than his valet's gossip.

"Come to the point, Marchand!" he exclaimed, in exasperation.

"I'm coming to it, Sire.... This fellow Welle sent word to me secretly, through the medium of a man named Richard Prince, that he was entrusted with messages for me from Europe, and that he wanted me..."

Napoleon was suddenly shaken by some occult force. He laid down his book and stared at his servant.

"Messages?" he repeated.

"I went to Jamestown at once, and I managed to meet Welle at the Porteous Inn, where he is staying with the other members of the commissioners' party. He made a very good impression on me at once. To begin with, he gave me a letter and a silk handkerchief which Madame Gourgaud, whom he saw in Paris, asked him to convey to the General. Then he told me that he had been employed as a botanist in the gardens at Schönbrunn...."

"At Schönbrunn, you say? At Schönbrunn, eh? Then..."

Napoleon did not dare to say all he had in mind; but a gleam of spirit came into his eyes.

"One day his superior, Inspector Boze, sent for him in great secrecy, handed him a little packet, and said to him: 'When you get to Saint Helena, give this to Monsieur Marchand. It's from his mother."

Bracing himself on his clenched fists, Napoleon sat up straight on his couch. He leant towards Marchand.

"Well, get on!... A packet from your mother, eh? And she's with the King of Rome. She takes care of him. She sees him every day. What does she say to you?"

"Sire, I opened the little packet. It contained a lock of hair and a bit of paper, on which my mother had written: 'I am sending you a lock of my hair. Send me a portrait of yourself, if you have a chance of getting one painted.'"

Napoleon sank back on his couch. So that was all? His mouth drooped bitterly.

"A lock of your mother's hair, eh, Marchand? That's a delicate attention on her part. You're luckier than I am. . . ."

The valet went red in the face. He stammered:

"That's just the point, Sire. This lock of hair. . . . My mother is over fifty. She's quite gray. . . . But this lock. . . ."

The truth dawned on Napoleon with a strength that shook him to the soul. He flung himself at Marchand.

"Let me see it! Be quick! . . ."

He snatched the little packet from Marchand and opened it. It contained a lock of golden, curly hair, soft as silk. One of the curls twined round his finger as soon as he touched it. The violence of his emotion made him close his eyes.

"Dear God, my son's hair, my child's hair!"

Tears ran down his cheeks. He raised the lock of hair to his lips, felt the softness of it, gave it the warmth of his own blood. He glanced around him anxiously, as though some Englishman might suddenly appear and rob him of his treasure.

Then he sat down on the couch again, and gazed at the curls which made a little heap of gold in the hollow of his hand. He reflected, with a clutch at his heart. . . .

This miracle, this possession of something of the substance of his son—he owed it, not to Marie Louise, but to a humble, almost illiterate serving woman. He imagined all the patience, all the artifice, all the ingenuity she must have employed to get this lock of hair to him.

It was not his wife who had thought about him, who had taken all this trouble for him, who had wanted to give him some consolation. It was a nurse, a servant. Which of the two hearts was the larger, the more noble—that

of this daughter of the people who had hitherto meant nothing to him, or that of the Empress to whom he had given a throne?

Napoleon's delight was so intense that echoes of it came to Hudson Lowe's ears. It threw him into fits. The idea that, unknown to him, Bonaparte should have received a lock of his son's hair made him beside himself. Who had dared to break the established rules? How had this ever happened? The end of the world would have struck him as an event of smaller importance.

Promptly Lowe set his police and his spies in motion. He multiplied inquiries. He laid a complaint against Stürmer, asked that he should be reprimanded, and did not rest until he had obtained Welle's expulsion.

Napoleon, who assumed that the botanist had been in contact with Marie Louise and his son in Vienna, had vainly asked to see him. When he heard that Welle had gone, he sighed:

"A man must be a sheer barbarian when he refuses a husband and a father the consolation of talking to somebody who has recently seen his wife and laid hands on his son."

Then life went on again, slow, endless, objectless, like water flowing through a pool, apparently motionless and ever reflecting a picture of the same sky in deadly monotony.

"The only thing of which we have too much here is time," said Napoleon.

Bertrand and Montholon were family men. They had their wives and their children. Gourgaud, whose blood was hot, went for long rides on horseback, shot partridge, stalked negresses, and attended every available dance in the hope of finding a fiancée. On holidays he went to

Deadwood, where the soldiers organized sports. Of these the most amusing was pig-hunting. The soldiers got hold of a young pig, smeared its tail profusely with fat from one of its dead comrades, and then everybody ran after it. The winner was the first to get hold of it by its tail.

Everybody did his best to amuse himself, though often in vain. Napoleon did not even try.

He simply watched the days go by. Boredom ate into his heart like an acid. He chewed the cud of his memories. There was no hope on his horizon. Week by week, the bars of his prison hemmed him in more closely. Meanwhile gaps were made in his entourage.

In the month of December, Las Cases was expelled from the island. His departure robbed Napoleon of a valued comrade; but perhaps it was a blessing in disguise. On his return to Europe, Las Cases would stir the French army and the Courts and peoples of Europe with his story of the hateful treatment which England was inflicting on Napoleon.

Now that he was not allowed to go where he liked, Napoleon had given up riding on horseback.

"Only a bird could ever get away from here," he said to Admiral Malcolm. "I would rather have been shut up in the Tower of London than in this wretched island. I shall not live three years here."

Already his health was failing. He had no appetite, he could not sleep, his legs swelled, and he began to suffer from his liver. To ease his pain, he took hot baths for hours at a time in a big trough of oak lined with lead, which looked more like a coffin than a bath-tub.

The thought of his son was the one thing that gave him courage, his sole reason for going on living, going on struggling. He brooded over his little King above all at night,

when he lay awake, changing from time to time from one bed to another. His heart was heavy for the boy.

"How will they bring him up?" he said to Montholon one day. "With what principles will they nurture his childhood? And suppose he turns out weak-minded? Suppose he takes after the Bourbons?"

Napoleon suddenly stopped. He shrank from a frightful idea which he scarcely dared to put into words. His eyes looked horrified. His voice trembled as he went on:

"And I've another idea which makes me shudder, Montholon. Suppose they inspire him with a horror of his father?"

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE DUKE OF REICHSTADT

THERE was no denying that the life of Count Maurice Dietrichstein was not all roses. The education of the young prince gave his tutor enough anxiety to bring him to the verge of tears. The count had poor health and a limited, cautious character. He was always fussing and, above all, immersed in details. He had taken his task to heart, and he exhausted himself at it.

He had great odds against him. Beneath his attractive appearance the boy hid the instincts of Napoleon: his aptitude for dissimulation and flattery; his strength of will which, whenever it seemed to weaken, did so only to spring up again and show itself firmer than ever.

He was in turn scatter-brained or obstinate, indifferent or animated by a spirit of contradiction of which nothing could get the better.

In the reports which Dietrichstein addressed to Metternich and Marie Louise, the tutor described all the ups and downs of the struggle which he carried on to turn the boy into a German prince.

The boy gave way, pulled himself together, weakened once, reclaimed his freedom again. But he was beaten in advance. The environment in which he lived absorbed him more and more, day by day. It was a gradual process of sinking into quicksand.

The isolation from affection in which he was kept taught him to hide his thoughts and feign indifference. People who love and are loved have open hearts; but he had nobody to cherish. He could feel no real affection around him: above all, no woman's affection.

His mother? He often thought about her, wondered why he never saw her, and asked when she was coming back.

"Very soon, in the summer," he was told.

He was delighted; but in the month of May 1817 it was learned that Marie Louise was not returning to Vienna this year. She was going to stay in her duchy. By way of excuse she informed her father that she was putting off the journey until next year in order to save money for her son's benefit. The boy was told that he would not see his mother after all. She was ill, and could not travel.

It was only half an untruth; but the illness of the ex-Empress of the French was of a particular kind. She had just given birth to a daughter. As she really needed a rest, she retired with Neipperg to Colorno, her summer palace. Thence she continued to administer her duchy, with a parrot and a little monkey perched on her shoulders. They got the benefit of the words of affection which were denied to her son.

Meanwhile the boy grew up under his tutors' control. Of all of them, the one he liked best was Matthew von Collin. With him he felt at home. One day, when his teacher scolded him, he replied politely:

"My dear Collin, bear your troubles patiently!"

This teacher of esthetics and the history of philosophy loved children and understood them. He went out of his way to amuse the prince. In fine weather, the two of them played Robinson Crusoe in the park at Schönbrunn.

Near the Glorietta, at the end of a somber path, in a

wild setting opposite the Schneeberg, they built a kind of hut and dug out a little cave. Here, surrounded by bows and arrows and wooden utensils, the prince had the intoxication of imagining that he was living on a desert island.

He felt remote from the world. In the solitude and the silence, memories of his babyhood and the picture of his father came back to him. So it befell that, one day in January 1818, he asked Collin:

"Why was I called the King of Rome?"

"Because at that time your father's Empire extended to Rome."

"Then did Rome belong to my father?"

"No, Rome belongs to the Pope."

The boy thought for a moment or two. Then he asked:

"Where is he now?"

"The Pope? In Rome, of course."

"No, I mean my father. I believe he's in the East Indies."

"Oh no, he isn't."

"Then I know where he is. He's in America."

"Why should he be there?"

"Then where is he, really?"

"I can't tell you," replied Collin, in some embarrassment.

"The ladies told me once that he was in England, but that he escaped."

"No, that's wrong. You know, Prince, you sometimes misunderstand people. . . ."

"Oh yes, I know I do."

"In any case, I can give you my word of honor that your father isn't in England."

But the boy pursued the subject.

"I also thought I heard somebody say that he was living in poverty."

Collin looked down at the boy pityingly. He realized where he might have got that idea. The German for "poverty" is "*elend*," which could be confused with "Saint Helena."

"In poverty? That isn't likely, or even possible."

The boy raised his head towards his master, and laughed in his relief.

"I didn't really think it could be true. . . ."

His tutors also concerned themselves with teaching him good manners and making him a man of the world. Sedini taught him dancing, and Eibler gave him piano lessons. He danced gracefully, with his girl cousins for partners.

One day he made a false step and fell down. He got up in a rage.

"That was a disgrace," he cried. "It really was a disgrace."

On his grandfather's birthday, in the month of October 1817, he was given a part in *The Savoyards*, a comedy by Kotzebue, and was a great success. All the ladies of the Court vied with one another in kissing and petting him. The new Empress, Caroline Augusta, clasped him in her arms and cried:

"*Ach, Fränzchen! Du, mein Schatz!*"

During the previous year, after seven months of widowerhood, the Emperor Francis could wait no longer. He replaced Maria Ludovica with a princess of Bavaria. Having used up three legal wives, he was now resolutely attacking his fourth.

If Metternich could have erased the name of Napoleon from history at the price of a pound of his flesh, he would have done so. Being unable to achieve anything against the past, he directed all his vigilance towards the future.

Never during his lifetime should a Napoleon ascend a throne.

The treaty of Fontainebleau had recognized Marie Louise's son as heir to the duchy of Parma. Metternich now definitely put an end to this outrageous claim. On June 10th, 1817, Austria signed an agreement by which, on Marie Louise's death, the duchy of Parma was to revert to the son of the ex-Queen of Etruria.

Coached by Neipperg, Marie Louise showed no resentment against her son's disinheritance. She simply requested that he should be given a name and a coat of arms, so that he should be placed in the same rank as the hereditary princes of the House of Austria. She declared herself satisfied when the Emperor promised to take care of the boy's future out of his personal fortune.

The Duchess of Parma, in short, did not want a crown for her son. She simply wanted him to become a rich and contented private citizen of Austria.

In accordance with his promise, on December 4th, 1817, the Emperor Francis assigned to his grandson certain property situated in Bohemia and known by the name of the Bavarian Palatinate estates. It remained to find the boy a name and a title. This was put off pending Marie Louise's next trip to Vienna. She arrived there at the beginning of July 1818.

She had asked that her son should be sent to meet her at Theresiendorf. The young prince showed great delight when he was told that he was going to see his mother again. But, before he set off, he paid a visit to his grandfather.

"Grandpapa," he said, "my mother is coming. Why isn't my father coming too?"

"Why isn't he?" replied the Emperor, curtly. "You want to know why he isn't? It's because your father was

naughty and they put him in prison; and if you're naughty they'll put you in prison too...."

The boy turned his eyes away to hide the anger that flashed in them. He set his teeth, and took himself off without replying.

As soon as she arrived in Vienna, Marie Louise set about regularizing her son's position. The question of his title was the most delicate to decide.

The Emperor suggested "Duke of Mödling," but Metternich objected. Marie Louise, in her turn, suggested "Duke of Babenberg"; but the Chancellor would not hear of this either. He thought "Duke of Buchstierad" more appropriate. Hereupon Marie Louise protested loudly. She was not going to look ridiculous in the eye of anybody who consulted the Court almanac. She would not have her son turned into a "half-baked duke."

The estate of Reichstadt in Bohemia had been raised to the dignity of a duchy in the month of March 1818. The Emperor and Metternich agreed on the title of "Duke of Reichstadt." Marie Louise, who knew how to content herself with little, accepted this title. "Reichstadt" rang well in her German ears.

On July 22nd, 1818, the Emperor Francis signed four letters patent which settled the status of his grandson: his duchy, his title, his arms and his rank at Court. They also imposed restrictions on the protocol of December 4th, 1817. Franz was not to enter into possession of his Bohemian estates until the death of his mother, who was to provide for him during her lifetime. Marie Louise was then only twenty-seven.

Nevertheless she was radiant with delight. With contentment she read over the description of her son's arms, on which figured two lions stylized as leopards and two sable griffons, with golden beaks, claws and crowns.

She found another subject of satisfaction. In drawing up the letters patent, the draftsmen had achieved the feat of making no mention of the name of Napoleon. Throughout them the boy was described as the "son of our dear daughter, Madame Marie Louise, Archduchess of Austria, Duchess of Parma, Piacenza and Guastella." If they had contained the expression, "born of an unknown father," they could not have answered better to the secret wish of her heart.

When Madame Laetitia, Napoleon's old mother, heard about this in Rome she was exultant.

"We are avenged," she said. "When the Emperor of Austria gave Marie Louise to my son, presumably he thought that *she* wasn't worthy to be *his* wife, but merely his mistress."

Once a King and son of an Emperor, and then Prince of Parma, the boy now took rank after the lowest of the Austrian archdukes. He no longer had the right even to bear the title of Imperial or Royal Highness.

Nevertheless, Marie Louise felt that she had won a victory. With an easy conscience, she went off to spend a few weeks in Baden. Then she took her son with her to the Imperial castle of Persenbeug on the Danube, where she spent the rest of the summer.

On September 19th, she returned to her duchy, while the Duke of Reichstadt went back to Schönbrunn, with a heavy heart. He was to spend another two years before he saw his mother again.

Meanwhile he kept on growing. By now he was a fine boy, and his health gave nobody a moment's anxiety. He was full of life and high spirits, fond of play and eager for violent exercise.

In the course of the summer of 1819, his grandfather

made him a present of a little gun which the archdukes had used in their childhood. The little boy of eight went shooting just like a grown-up.

In August and September he killed eighteen hares, twenty-two pheasant and two partridge. He shot with such coolness and accuracy that the Emperor marveled at him.

"*Er ist nicht feuercheu,*" he said. "He's not afraid of firearms."

It was at this point that Metternich scored a bull's-eye. The boy had almost forgotten his father's language. He had to be taught it all over again. His tutors, Dietrichstein and Collin, gave him French lessons. He spoke French without a foreign accent; but he took it up again with Germanic turns of phrase. Henceforth he thought in German.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE DEATH OF THE EAGLE

MONTHS and years went by. The outlaw on his rock had nothing to distract him but the spectacle of nature.

First the sun burnt up the grass of the meadows and brought the purple hibiscus into flower. Then the trade-wind blew, laden with rain, mist and blood-colored clouds. Next the sun reappeared, overpowering master of the barren rock. But a day came when hurricanes from the south swallowed it up in a sea the color of ink which merged with the sky. Finally there were the endless months of winter, dragging along amid a stifling humidity which mildewed woodwork, leather and clothes, and made everything stick to one's fingers.

In what could Napoleon interest himself, when he had nothing to expect from life but death, and when the dreary horizon which surrounded him linked together only days identically the same?

He drained his boredom like a poison whose effect, this time, could not betray him. Yet he welcomed the smallest incident with the feeling that Providence was granting him a respite.

In the month of May 1817, he learnt that a ship, the *Baring*, had just reached Saint Helena. On board her was a sailor who had been entrusted with conveying to Napoleon a marble bust of his son.

Fearing some trickery, Lowe hesitated about delivering it to Napoleon. Finally, however, he decided to do so.

When he heard about Lowe's strange scruples, Napoleon gave free vent to his resentment.

"If he had ordered the bust to be destroyed, I would have lodged a complaint that would have made every Englishman's hair stand on end. I would have said things that would have made that fellow Lowe execrated by every mother in England as a monster in human form."

At length the packing-case was brought to Longwood and opened. But then a fear assailed Napoleon. He asked Gourgaud:

"What decoration have they put on my son?"

"The eagle, Sire."

"But not the Austrian eagle, I hope?"

"Oh no, the eagle which Your Majesty yourself wears."

Thus reassured, Napoleon took up the bust. He felt like clasping it in his arms. He felt like kissing it. In this stone, he seemed to hold something of the flesh of his son. It was as though his fatherly love might warm it into life.

The bust, he thought, made the boy look like his mother. He summoned everybody to admire it: O'Meara, the Montholons, the Balcombe children.

It had been sent to him by a London merchant who thought it would be a good stroke of business. But Napoleon chose to ignore the fact. His heart demanded that it should be a present from his wife, or at least that the initiative in sending it to him should have come from her.

"It was Marie Louise who sent it to me," he declared.

He gazed at it in ecstasy until eight o'clock in the evening. It made him forget his dinner. In a voice trembling with emotion, he said to O'Meara:

"Look at it! Look at that face! A man who could think

of destroying a face like that must be a sheer barbarian, a cruel savage. A man who would do a thing like that would be capable of committing any crime."

His face was radiant with happiness and pride. But he returned to Hudson Lowe.

"He says that this bust isn't worth a hundred louis. The man has no soul. A father could think no price too high for such a possession in circumstances like mine. In my eyes, it is worth a million louis."

He summoned Bertrand.

"Send for the man who brought it, and give him three hundred guineas."

Little by little, Napoleon's state of health got worse. He took less and less exercise, and became more and more obese. In his bloodless face, which had assumed the hue of ocher, his eyes shone feverishly. He was afflicted with constipation, and nothing could cure it. One day he passed his hand across his stomach and said to O'Meara:

"It feels like a butcher's knife stuck in there, with the blade broken off in the wound."

The swelling in his legs increased. Lowe took alarm. Suppose his prisoner should die? He declared himself ready to make concessions. But Napoleon repulsed his advances disdainfully.

"My health," he said, "suffers most of all from the insults I have to endure from the man in authority here."

Hereupon O'Meara quarreled with Lowe, who accused him of siding with General Bonaparte. Finally the governor secured O'Meara's recall, and he was ordered to leave Longwood.

"The crime will be consummated all the sooner," said Napoleon.

He loaded O'Meara with presents, entrusted him with

various commissions, and gave him a letter of introduction to his family. In it he wrote:

> "If he sees my dear Louise, I beg her to let him kiss her hand."

He said to O'Meara:

"If you see my son, kiss him for me, and tell him never to forget that he was born a Frenchman."

When the time of their parting came, at the end of July 1818, he held out his hand to the doctor.

"Good-by, O'Meara. We shall never meet again. Good luck!"

O'Meara was succeeded by Dr. Stokoe. After various misadventures, he was haled before a court-martial, and dismissed for daring to maintain that Napoleon was ill. Henceforth Napoleon refused to see any of the doctors whom Lowe tried to impose on him.

Life slowed down more and more at Longwood. Subject to perpetual persecution by the governor, Napoleon defended himself as best he could. More than ever he scorned anything that had an English flavor about it. He made the most of what he had brought with him from France. He had his old green hunting coat turned.

"At least," he said, "it's French cloth."

His main task was to keep the peace among the members of his entourage, whose relations were becoming embittered. Gourgaud, in particular, was ready to pick a quarrel with anybody. He alleged that Napoleon enjoyed Madame de Montholon's favors, and showed himself jealous.

In the month of February 1818, Gourgaud had an altercation with Montholon, and challenged him to a duel. Napoleon forbade them to fight. In a fury, Gourgaud left Longwood. At once Governor Lowe was down on his knees

to Gourgaud, who, in his rage, talked recklessly. He said that his master's illness was all a pretense. He spoke of clandestine correspondence and plans for escape. The loose-tongued fellow had turned up just at the right time to support Lowe. The governor sent him to England by the first available ship.

Little by little, Napoleon found the circle of his friends diminishing. Admiral Malcolm had gone. So had Balcombe and his two little daughters. February 1818 witnessed the death of Cipriani, Napoleon's butler and confidant. For lack of a Catholic priest, he had to be buried by a Protestant clergyman. At the beginning of 1819, Madame de Montholon embarked for France. Urgent financial and family affairs summoned her there. Besides, her health could not stand the climate of Saint Helena any longer.

In the evening of the day when she left Longwood, Napoleon said to Marchand:

"Montholon, for his part, knows that he can't leave me for the next two years. But then you will all return to Europe. You will see your families again. Montholon will see his wife and children, and you will see your mother. I shall be dead, deserted in this desolation."

Influenced by his wife, Bertrand in his turn asked leave to go. He pleaded the education of his children, who were growing up. Henceforth Napoleon refused to see Madame Bertrand. He kept up a deep resentment towards her, which did not weaken until just before he died.

He would have been prepared to let the Bertrands go, but for the fact that the departure of the parents would involve that of the children. The Bertrand children were the sole consolation left to him. There were four of them: Napoleon, Henri, Hortense, and Arthur, the last of whom had been born in Saint Helena.

Napoleon was attached to them because, at their different ages, they reminded him of the son about whom he spoke so seldom. He often invited them to tea, filled them with good things, and ordered Pierson, his head cook, to make candies for them. He played with them, took them for drives in his carriage, and gave them rides on Fringant and Vizir, the two horses which he had brought from France.

So far as his means allowed, he overwhelmed them with toys and other presents. He got his doctor to pierce Hortense's ears and gave her coral ear-rings. He got Noverraz's wife to make her a riding-habit. One day he realized that her dress was a disgrace.

"Wait a minute, Hortense," he said. "I'll give you something out of which you can make a pretty cape."

He summoned Marchand and gave him an order. The little girl subsequently went home very proud of herself, wearing over her shoulders, like a queen's mantle, a fine suit of cerise velvet trimmed with gold and silk. It was one of four suits presented to Napoleon by the city of Lyons when he was First Consul.

Another time, he made Napoleon Bertrand a present of a gold watch because he knew his multiplication table best.

Little Arthur, who was now three, one day saw a fine Java pony. He longed for it, and told Napoleon so.

"Come back tomorrow when the midday gun is fired," said Napoleon, "and I'll give it to you."

The boy kept the appointment promptly; but Napoleon was asleep. Marchand showed Arthur into his bedroom. The boy sat down on a stool and waited until Napoleon awakened. As soon as Napoleon opened his eyes, Arthur made a rush for him and jabbered at him in a kind of pidgin in which there was more English and Italian than French.

"The midday gun has been fired. Where's my horse? I'm waiting for it!"

He was so superbly sure of himself that Napoleon promptly gave him a thousand francs to buy his pony. The boy rushed off to get it. But he was not yet satisfied. His present was incomplete.

"I want golden spurs," he said.

"All right," replied Napoleon. "But you must ask me for them in French. Then I'll give them to you."

Sometimes, when he was alone with the children, Napoleon would take one of them on his knee, clasp him in his arms, lay his cheek against his own, let the child's hair caress his face, close his eyes over his memories, and weep inwardly.

Sometimes, too, he looked at them with such an expression on his face that the children were afraid of him. . . .

On September 20th, 1819, a small party which had taken seven months to come from Rome landed in Saint Helena. It consisted of the doctor, the two priests and the cook whom Napoleon had asked his family to send him.

Their choice of these men did not do much credit to Cardinal Fesch and Madame Mère. Antommarchi was a doctor of no great capacity, but eaten up by ambition and with plenty to say for himself. Abbé Buonita was an elderly man threatened with apoplexy, deaf and somewhat stuttering. Abbé Vignali was a Corsican peasant, well meaning, but lacking in education and able to speak only his own dialect.

Antommarchi's arrival, however, had an immediately salutary effect. The doctor advised his patient to take more exercise. As a result, Napoleon started working in his garden, and asked his entourage to help him.

They made a grassy bank, they planted trees, they

constructed a grotto and a pond. They brought water from Diana's Peak by conduits. Chandelier, the cook, by a masterpiece of ingenuity, managed to present his master with the unexpected spectacle of a fountain.

Napoleon dug and watered in planter's costume: nankeen coat and breeches and a broad-brimmed straw hat. But sometimes he stopped working and looked around him with lackluster eyes. They heard him murmur:

"What a desolation! What a disaster!"

He soon tired of this pastime. The good it did him was only fleeting. Before long, his health grew worse again. He suffered so much that he asked Antommarchi whether he had not inherited cancer of the pylorus, from which his father had died. The doctor's efforts to reassure him were in vain.

Little by little, life went out of him. Sometimes he stayed for two or three days in his bedroom, unshaven, clad in a dressing-gown, with the neck of his nightshirt open, shod in red slippers and with a nightcap on his head. His hair started falling out, and he dragged himself about heavily.

Nothing interested him any longer: neither his work, nor the news which the papers brought him two or three months late. For that matter, he had noticed that Hudson Lowe allowed only such papers to reach him as were calculated to displease him and hurt him.

In this way he learnt, one after the other, of Murat's death; Ney's execution; his sister Caroline's remarriage to MacDonald; and Madame Walewska's remarriage—even his sweet Marie!—to General d'Ornano.

He learnt, too, that the treaty of June 10th had robbed his son of the inheritance of Parma, and that, on July 22nd, 1818, the King of Rome had become the Duke of Reichstadt.

Everything was bitterness, everything was weariness. He had but one hope left. He never tired of repeating it:

"I shall die here; but my son will reign after me. . . ."

Bertrand returned to the charge and asked for ten months' leave to take his children to Europe. He pleaded his wife's state of health. In fact, successive miscarriages had exhausted the big, blonde, black-eyed woman.

"They'll all go, my boy," Napoleon said to Marchand. "Only you will be left to close my eyes."

He surrendered himself to the somnolence which beset him. He refused to let Antommarchi rouse him out of it.

"Oh, leave me alone, Doctor!" he said. "I'm happy only when I'm asleep."

On October 4th, 1820, he went for his last ride on horseback. He came back from it exhausted. Montholon and Bertrand had to help him up the steps of Longwood. After that, he scarcely went out at all. When he did, it was in his carriage.

On October 10th, he had a fainting attack. Antommarchi wanted to blister him; but Napoleon refused.

"Do you think Monsieur Lowe doesn't martyr me enough?" he said.

He ended by giving way, but he was soon sorry; for Antommarchi, through negligence, hurt him.

"A beggar in a hospital isn't treated like this," Napoleon cried.

He was a difficult patient. He refused to take anything but chicken-soup, and he shrank from light and noise.

He asked his doctor to make a post-mortem examination of his body when he died.

"I want my son to know from what disease I died, so that he may take steps to avoid it."

At the beginning of November, he took to vomiting. He slept restlessly, and he was always cold.

During the daytime, he dragged himself into the garden. He sat down on the edge of the pond, and threw bits of bread to the fish which he had had put into it. But the fish died, one after the other. This affected him.

"You see for yourself," he said to Antommarchi, "there's some spell about me. . . . Everything I love, everything that attaches itself to me, is thereby doomed."

Slowly his vitality ebbed. He was conscious that he was failing.

"I'm fading away," he said.

He resisted all remedies. What was the use? On December 26th, 1820, he learnt that his sister Elisa was dead. He reflected for a moment or two.

"A masterful woman. . . ."

Then he turned to Antommarchi.

"Well, Doctor, she's shown me the way. . . ."

The first two months of 1821 went by. In view of the state of Napoleon's health, Grand Marshal Bertrand had decided to stay. The patient was failing from day to day. He scarcely ever went out now, and then only in his carriage, when the wind had dropped. He came back tired and shivering.

His vomiting, too, increased in frequency, and it exhausted him. The pain which tore at his side—the knife-thrust, as he called it—became worse. He knew that he was dying. When he sank to his couch, he murmured:

"Alas, poor me!"

On March 15th, he said to Antommarchi:

"Oh, Doctor, how it hurts! My belly seems to be cut away. . . . I feel that I won't last much longer."

The next day, with his head sunk on his chest, he sighed:

"How low have I fallen! It is an effort to raise my eyelids now. . . . I am no longer Napoleon. . . ."

At night, he dragged himself from one bed to another, or, for fear of the mosquitoes, spent hours in an armchair in the darkest corner of the room. Marchand, who usually sat up with him, was at the end of his tether. Bertrand and Montholon lent him a hand, and the three of them divided the night watch among them.

Napoleon had no confidence in Antommarchi, who put no heart into his care of him. The doctor was rarely on the spot when he was wanted. He spent his time touring the island or running after women at Jamestown.

Montholon begged Napoleon to call in another doctor. Arnott, the surgeon of the 20th regiment, had a good reputation. Napoleon at first refused indignantly, but finally he agreed to see the doctor.

Arnott arrived on April 1st. He examined his patient, and found nothing abnormal about him. Napoleon seemed to have something on his mind.

"I have a sharp, acute pain that seems to cut me like a razor," he said to the doctor. "Do you think my pylorus is affected? My father died of cancer of the pylorus at the age of thirty-nine. Is it hereditary?"

Arnott, who was a tall, jovial fellow, going gray, reassured him. His pylorus was healthy, his liver was normal, and all that was wrong with him was constipation, which could be put right. Then the doctor took his leave. Henceforth he came every day with Antommarchi about four o'clock.

On April 2nd, the servants said that they had seen a comet to the east.

"A comet?" said Napoleon. "Then my end is not far off. A comet foretold the death of Cæsar."

He refused to take up his quarters at New Longwood, the new residence intended for him by the English, which had been under construction for the past five years.

"It is too late," he said. "By the time the house is finished, all I shall want is a grave."

One day Arnott asked him how he felt.

"Not very well, doctor," he replied. "I shall soon be giving back to the earth the bit of life that so many kings begrudge me."

In the afternoons, he got up, put on a dressing-gown, and lay on his couch. When his sufferings became intense, hot compresses were applied to his stomach. To avoid effort, he had let his beard grow, and this made him look dreadful. On April 8th, he decided to be shaved. They moved him to the window to get more light. Napoleon looked at his arms and legs.

"The Devil has been at my calves," he said to Montholon, with a smile.

During the next few days he seemed preoccupied. He spent long periods in silence, with his eyes gazing a long way off, fixed on something which only he could see coming. He watched its approach undismayed.

On April 13th, he told Montholon that he wanted to dictate to him his last will and testament. He had long since weighed all its terms in his mind and settled them. It was for his son that he wrote this testament. His voice rose, as though to be heard all over the world and borne on every echo of the future.

> "I die in the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion, in which I was born more than fifty years ago.
>
> "I desire that my ashes should rest on the banks of the Seine, in the midst of the French people whom I have loved so much."

Napoleon stopped for a moment. He must now speak about his wife: the wife who had betrayed him. But could he cast upon her the suspicion of her infamy which de-

voured him? He could not. He could not separate the mother from the child. To asperse Marie Louise publicly would do harm to his son. On the other hand, his love of her, his trust in her, proclaimed before the world, must forever link their two-fold fate.

> "I have always had occasion to be well pleased with my very dear wife, Marie Louise. I preserve till my last moment the most affectionate feelings towards her. I beg her to watch over my son, and safeguard him from the snares which still surround his childhood."

Then he addressed to his son a last request: a wish which rang like a command.

> "I beg my son never to forget that he was born a French prince.... He must never fight against France, or do anything to harm France. He must adopt my motto: 'Everything for the French people.'"

He went on to strike another blow at the English government, which had been false to the laws of honor in its treatment of him.

> "I die before my time, murdered by the English oligarchy and their hired assassin. The English people will not be slow to avenge me."

Finally he passed on to his legacies. His money, his jewels, and his other property he left to his servants, to his comrades in arms, to all those who had remained faithful to him.

His son had no need of gold and jewels. He had his father's name, his father's fame. But to his son Napoleon left all his personal possessions: all the clothes he had worn; all the things he had handled. They had shared in his life.

They might hand on to his son something of his vital force, his strength, his genius.

The boy was to have his table-silver; his camp beds; his body-linen; his gray greatcoat; the blue cloak he had worn at Marengo; the sword he had carried at Austerlitz; Sobieski's saber; his gold dressing-case; his snuff-boxes; his sweet-boxes; his medals.

Bertrand and Marchand were to take charge of all these things, pending the time when they could hand them over to Napoleon's son.

Noverraz was entrusted with keeping Napoleon's accouterments and sporting guns. Saint-Denis was similarly entrusted with four hundred books to be selected from his library.

On April 14th, Napoleon went on with his dictation. He dealt with the two hundred million francs of his personal fortune, and appointed Montholon, Bertrand and Marchand executors of his will.

He kept returning to the subject of his son. He requested that his executors should assemble all keepsakes, engravings, pictures, books and medals which might give pleasure to the boy, or be of service to him in destroying false ideas which might have been inculcated into him. Some of these things were to be found in the possession of Constant and Roustan, who had stolen them; some in the hands of Monsieur de Turenne; and some in the lumber-rooms of the Tuileries.

Napoleon left keepsakes to all the members of his family, except Louis. He exerted himself not to forget anybody who had served him or made sacrifices for him.

On April 15th, he got Marchand to draw up an inventory of his table-silver and all his personal belongings. The valet listed even his slippers. The King of Rome must not be robbed even of a pin.

During the afternoon, propped up on his pillows, Napoleon started copying out his will with his own hand. He wrote industriously; but there were a score of pages to it. A sheet of cardboard served him as a writing-desk. Montholon stood beside him, holding an ink-bottle for him. Vomiting interrupted his task and worried him. To revive himself a little, he ate a biscuit dipped in Constance water, which Las Cases had sent him.

"My boy," he said to Montholon, "it's time for me to make an end. I feel it."

The next day, he finished copying out his will, and dictated two preliminary codicils. On April 17th, he dictated to Montholon the last counsels which he addressed to his son.

> "My son must not think of avenging my death. He should profit by it.... If he proposed to recommence my wars, he would be nothing but a mimic."

Then, with his eyes wide open, and sweat gathering at his temples, he prophesied:

"The Bourbons will never last...."

All these efforts exhausted him. The night of April 17th was a trying one. He kept on vomiting. In the morning, he refused the medicine which Antommarchi urged him to take.

"No," he said. "England wants me dead. I won't keep her waiting, and I can die all right without drugs."

During the afternoon he was a little better. The weather was fine and the sun was shining. Napoleon said to Marchand:

"Open the door into the garden, my boy, and let me breathe God's good air."

Then he sent Bertrand to pluck him a rose. He inhaled its fragrance for a long time, with his eyes closed. He felt

refreshed. At midnight he asked for some fried potatoes, ate them, and had no trouble with his digestion.

During the morning of April 19th, he got Bertrand to read Hannibal's campaigns to him. In the course of the afternoon, he spoke to Montholon about his death with serenity, almost with detachment.

"My end is approaching...."

He talked about his companions' return to France and the provisions they must take with them for such a long voyage.

"Don't forget the sheep in the outhouses," he said.

He spent a painful night. The next day, when Arnott came to visit him, the suffering he had endured had left him bristling. He made the Englishman hang his head by casting his hatred of England in his teeth once more.

"Such is the hospitality of your government.... I have been slowly murdered, with premeditation.... You have denied me ordinary communication with my family, such as is never refused to anybody.... You have let no letters, no messages, reach me from Europe. My wife and even my son are dead to me.... Dying on this wretched rock, I bequeath the shame of my death to the Royal Family of England."

On April 22nd, Napoleon wrote four fresh codicils with his own hand. He kept on remembering people, and he did not want to overlook anybody. He bore in mind even the children of those who had served him. He asked for his jewel-casket, and chose a box ornamented with a cameo for Lady Holland and a gold snuff-box for Arnott. He gave Marchand the diamond necklace which Queen Hortense had returned to him when he left Malmaison.

"Take this necklace," he said. "It is worth two hundred thousand francs. When you get to France, it will enable

you to await the benefit of what I have left you in my will."

On April 23rd, he ate a little minced pheasant, and dictated his seventh codicil, in which, among other things, he left twenty thousand francs to the priest who had taught him how to read.

On the 26th, he vomited a substance composed of blackish clots which looked like grains of coffee. Arnott and Antommarchi glanced at one another and turned pale. It was the sign of cancer. It meant death.

That night Napoleon entrusted Marchand with the original of his will. He had his manuscripts and his jewel-casket taken to Montholon, and his weapons to Bertrand. He seemed satisfied, and, at eleven o'clock, he said to Montholon:

"Well, my boy, now that I've put all my affairs so nicely in order, it would be a pity not to die, wouldn't it?"

On April 28th he was moved into the drawing-room, a larger room, where he had more air. His two camp beds were set up, with the one on which he usually slept between the two windows. He refused to let himself be carried into the room.

"No, no," he said, "you can carry me when I'm dead. For the time being, you need only help me."

After a feverish night, he had a fairly quiet day on April 29th. He drank a great deal of water, and expressed satisfaction with an idea which had struck him.

"Yes," he said, "I should like to be buried where this cool, pure water flows."

On April 30th, in the morning, he had an attack of hiccups which lasted two hours. His eyes strayed about the wall paper, which was yellow with blue flowers, and came to rest on a little portrait of his son. He betrayed such

suffering that Marchand took it upon himself to remove the picture.

On May 1st, at eleven o'clock, Napoleon received Madame Bertrand. She sat at his bedside and sobbed. He asked her to bring Hortense to him.

As the day went on, his mind wandered. He talked about imaginary things. His spirit had already left the earth.

The next day, he had another attack of hiccups, his stomach was swollen, and he had a raging thirst. He drank a little sugared water and wine.

"That's good," he said, "that's very good."

That evening Abbé Vignali came and administered the last sacrament to him.

During the night he was delirious again. He called upon his son and his old comrades in arms.

"Desaix! Masséna! Ah, victory is ours! Quick, press home the charge! We've got them!..."

On May 3rd, outside his room, a consultation was held in which two other English doctors, Shortt and Mitchell, took part. It was decided to rub the patient's back with *eau de cologne* and administer a little calomel to him. Marchand undertook to make Napoleon swallow the drug without his knowledge; but Napoleon detected the trick.

"So you're betraying me too, are you?" he said, sadly.

In the course of the following night, the calomel produced its effect: eight evacuations. Napoleon's sheets had to be changed every time. At length, exhausted, the dying man complained that these changes hurt him, and his bed was left soiled.

On May 4th, in the morning, he vomited a black substance again, and his hiccup reappeared. He wanted to get up, and Antommarchi had to hold him in bed by force. Then Arnott gave him a potion with a basis of ether and

opium, which calmed him. All he was able to take was a little water with wine or orange-juice. Outside, the trade-wind rose to a gale and ravaged the plantations.

When night fell, the sea could be heard thundering in the distance, the wind howled, and the house quivered like a leaf. Lying in his bed in the dark, soaked with sweat, Napoleon was in delirium.

At two o'clock in the morning, he murmured distinctly:

"France.... The army.... My son.... Josephine...."

They were the last words he spoke.

It was the morning of May 5th, Marchand opened the Venetian shutters, and the daylight came into the room. At seven o'clock Madame Bertrand arrived. She was followed by all the French people at Longwood.

Bareheaded, they stood along the walls and watched their dying master. Napoleon had ceased to move. His arms lay outside the sheets alongside his body. His lower jaw had dropped, and his wide-open eyes had a glassy stare. Antommarchi felt his pulse. Life was ebbing.

The wind had fallen. At eleven o'clock, the sun pierced the mist and in the distance the sea glimmered as far as the eye could reach. The French, in full-dress uniform, went on with their vigil. Their features were drawn with fatigue and their eyes damp with emotion. Madame Bertrand bit her handkerchief. As he gazed at his master, Marchand felt full of pain at his powerlessness to help him. His eyes were heavy with tears, and his lips trembled.

The day dripped away, minute by minute. In the afternoon, a servant brought the Bertrand children; but little Napoleon fainted, and all of them had to be sent away again. At three o'clock, Antommarchi murmured:

"I can't feel his pulse any more...."

He felt for it at the carotid artery. He put his hands

on Napoleon's feet. They were icy. Napoleon's eyes had already turned up in their sockets.

There was profound silence in the room. All that was heard was the gasping breath of the dying man, the murmur of Vignali's prayers in the dining-room; the tick-tock of the little gilded clock; and the cooing of two doves with silvery wings and rosy feet, perched on the window-sill and telling their love endlessly....

It grew darker rapidly. At 5:40, the evening gun re-echoed in everybody's heart. The two doves flew away. The sun sank, a ball of fire, into the blood-red sea. Night fell, overwhelming everything. Its shadow fell upon Napoleon....

A few minutes passed. Antommarchi bent over Napoleon. A little froth oozed from his lips. The doctor made a sign. It was all over.... The time was 5:51.

Madame Bertrand stopped the little clock. Marchand fetched a taper from the next room and held it up in the air. All of them gathered round Napoleon.

All in a moment, death had given him back his youth, his good looks.

CHAPTER XXXIX

A BOY'S TEARS

It was an evening in July. The Duke of Reichstadt was in the bedroom in his new apartments, on the third floor of the palace of Schönbrunn.

Through the open window he could see the main entrance to the palace; the two red marble obelisks surmounted by eagles with outstretched wings; the little bridge which spanned the black water of the Wien; and, opposite the Rudolfstrasse, the two stone lions facing one another. In the distance in one direction lay Vienna, and in the other the mountains.

Little by little, the noises of the day dissolved into the twilight. The boy could hear the subdued hum of the city settling down for the night. Now and again a military order rang out in the main courtyard, and flights of martinets pierced the golden dusk with long-drawn, croaking cries. Far away, rosy clouds shed a soft light on the summit of the Kahlenberg. One after the other, tawny shadows blotted out the hills which stood shoulder to shoulder in the direction of Dornbach.

All at once, the young duke turned around. Captain Foresti had just come into the room. He was clad all in black, his face was pale, and some invisible burden appeared to oppress him. With his entrance the darkness of the night seemed to fill the room all at once. The boy had

a presentiment of disaster. He recoiled against the wall as the messenger of misfortune advanced towards him.

The news of Napoleon's death had reached England at the beginning of July. The banking house of Rothschild had at once dispatched a courier to carry it to Vienna. For the first time for many years, Metternich spent a night without nightmares. Through all the Courts of Europe swept a breath of pure air, and sovereigns breathed freely again.

When he learned that he had nothing more to fear from his son-in-law, the Emperor found himself in embarrassing perplexity. To be sure, he was entirely of Metternich's opinion. The dead man's light must be hid under a bushel. Nothing must be said about his death. Above all, his will must not be published. But the Emperor's position as a grandfather imposed upon him the duty of breaking the news to the dead man's son.

It was a thankless job, and his courage failed him. He sought for somebody to relieve him of it. Dietrichstein, the boy's principal tutor, was away at Würtzburg. The Emperor nominated Foresti.

The captain had waited two days for a favorable opportunity of softening what he knew must be a cruel blow to the boy. This evening, the quiet hour of twilight struck him as suited to his purpose.

He gazed at the boy who stood before him anxiously.

The duke was now ten years old, and looked twelve. He was tall and slender. His long curls had been cut, and his fair hair now waved around his brow. He was wearing white breeches and a dark coat which set off his rosy complexion and his blue eyes.

"Prince," said Foresti, "you made your first Communion last month, so you are no longer a child, and you should not be treated as one.... Today your august grandfather

has entrusted me with a painful mission. I must ask you to summon up all your courage, and also all your Christian sentiments...."

The boy leant against the wall. His hands trembled. He stared with ever increasing fear at this man who, he knew now, had come here to hurt him.

"My mother?..." he asked.

"No, it has nothing to do with Madame your mother...."

The boy went still paler. In a voice so low that Foresti could hardly hear him, he whispered:

"He is dead?..."

The captain bowed his head. As though to himself, the duke repeated:

"He is dead."

Foresti made the prince sit down, took him by the hand, and talked to him at length.

With decent reservations, he explained to his pupil that Napoleon had ended his days in Saint Helena, an island in the Atlantic Ocean. He had lived there well treated, and surrounded by a little Court. But an incurable disease had gradually undermined his health. He had died a good Christian.

The boy listened to him wide-eyed, with his face bloodless. Never had his masters spoken to him about his father of their own accord. The first time one of them condescended to do so, it was to tell him that his father was dead.

"Saint Helena!" he repeated, "Saint Helena!"

All at once, he moved away from Foresti, went and sat down at the window, buried his face in his hands, and burst into tears. The assistant-tutor let him weep.

The boy wept half the night and during the next day. His tutors made no attempt to console him, for they knew

beforehand that anything they could say or do would be in vain.

Towards evening on the next day, the boy pulled himself together, dried his eyes, and started walking up and down the room.

To the great surprise of Dietrichstein and Foresti, during the next few weeks he asked no questions about his father. He realized that nobody around him could sincerely share his grief. Lest it should be profaned, he kept it to himself, shut up in his own heart.

Without saying a word, he donned the black clothes which were given him. His household—alone among the members of the Austrian Court—went into mourning for three days. The Emperor, with Metternich's approval, had decided that they should do so. At the same time, the duke's tutors were recommended to show themselves in public as little as possible while they were wearing mourning.

In the Parma Opera House, Marie Louise had just been listening to Rosine's great song in *The Barber of Seville*. Then a member of her suite handed her a copy of the *Piedmont Gazette*.

Thus it was through a newspaper announcement that she learned she had been a widow for the past two months.

Emotion of such a kind is often disastrous to pregnant women. Marie Louise was eight months gone for the second time with a child by Neipperg. She felt very much upset.

Above all, she resented the fact that she should have learned of her widowhood from a newspaper. Why shouldn't they have sent her a courier from Vienna? It was not until July 20th that she received the official intimation.

Meanwhile, on the previous day, she had written a letter

to Madame de Crenneville, her intimate friend, in which she described her emotional disturbance.

> "...I must confess that I was much affected. Though I never had any warm feeling of any kind towards him, I cannot forget that he was the father of my son, and that, far from treating me badly, as the world believes, he always treated me with every consideration, which is the most one can expect in a political marriage.
>
> "So I was very much upset; and, while one should rejoice that he ended his unhappy life in a Christian way, I would have wished many more years of life and happiness for him—so long as he was nowhere near me."

In short, Marie Louise was affected by Napoleon's death. But it was only one annoyance amid many other troubles: the heat, the mosquitoes, her approaching childbirth.

She went on:

> "I have been so badly bitten in the face that I look a fright, and I am glad that I cannot appear in public."

In fact, the mosquitoes came in handy....

Marie Louise's Court went into mourning for three months. But at once a difficulty arose. What was her husband to be called in the official announcement of his death? The Emperor? Napoleon? Bonaparte? All these appellations were in bad taste and awakened hateful memories.

It was Neipperg, that man of fertile mind, who rescued his best beloved from her dilemma. After juggling Napoleon away while he was alive, he proceeded to juggle him away now that he was dead.

In accordance with Neipperg's suggestion, Napoleon became merely "our august Sovereign's *Serenissimo consorte....*"

Prince Consort—he who had played pitch and toss with thrones, brought all the kings of Europe to their knees, and conquered half the world! It took some thinking out....

On July 30th, Marie Louise attended a fine memorial service for her husband which was celebrated in the chapel of the palace at Sala, one of her summer residences. She sat in her private box, and her long black veil came in very useful to hide the size of her stomach.

She ordered a thousand Masses to be said in Parma, and the same number in Vienna; but she forbade the officials to mention Napoleon's name.

Having thus fulfilled all the obligations of a good wife towards a dead husband, she set off at the end of July for Sologrange with a quiet mind. There, on August 9th, 1821, she gave birth in secret to a son.

On October 15th, Antommarchi arrived in Parma. He presented himself at the ducal palace, and requested audience with Her Majesty. He wished to show her the letter in which Napoleon had introduced him to her. But it was Neipperg who received him.

"I cannot let you see Her Majesty," said Neipperg, as though he regretted it very much. "You would only increase her grief. She sobs and sighs all day long. But I shall be glad to act as your intermediary."

Antommarchi accepted his good offices. Neipperg left the room, but he was soon back .

"Her Majesty has read the letter.... She is delighted to know Napoleon's last wishes in your respect. But, before giving effect to them, she must submit them to her august father."

The doctor proceeded to ask for news of the Duke of Reichstadt.

"He's doing splendidly," said Neipperg.

"Is he in good health?"

"As strong as a lion."

"And he is promising?"

"Positively bursting with genius. Never was there a more promising boy."

So Antommarchi went his way, with nothing but a diamond ring on his finger for godspeed. That night they were performing Rossini's *La Cenerentola* at the Parma Opera House. The doctor attended the performance. He saw Marie Louise in her box. She looked thin, haggard and exhausted. Only a widow's grief, Antommarchi thought to himself, could explain such shocking havoc.

Marie Louise had thus definitely broken with everything which might remind her, directly or indirectly, of her first husband.

She refused to let Marchand bring her the lace which Napoleon had left her in his will; nor would she accept the bracelet which Napoleon's faithful servant had woven out of a lock of his dead master's hair.

The Duke of Reichstadt was no better served in his inheritance. Marchand had also woven a watch-chain for him out of Napoleon's hair. He never received it. Metternich, moreover, consistently refused to let Marchand, Montholon or Bertrand see him and hand over to him the personal belongings with which Napoleon had entrusted them.

Nor was this all. Not content with declining her husband's heart, Marie Louise would not accept the plaster death-mask which Antommarchi had made from Napoleon's face. His death-mask passed from hand to hand. It reached the servants' quarters. It served as a plaything for the children of the palace steward, who dragged it about on the end of a string.

In Rome Madame Mère adopted a very different attitude. This old Corsican peasant woman showed a soul to match the misfortune which had overtaken her. On August 15th, she wrote to Lord Castlereagh to request the remains of her son.

> "The Emperor Napoleon's mother hereby claims from his enemies the ashes of her son.... My son has no need of honors. His name suffices for his fame. But I have need to kiss his mortal remains.
>
> "In the name of justice, in the name of humanity, I adjure you not to refuse my request. To obtain the remains of my son, I am ready to supplicate the whole Ministry. I am ready to supplicate His Britannic Majesty.
>
> "I gave Napoleon to France and to the world. In the name of God, in the name of all mothers, I hereby beseech you, Milord, not to refuse me my son's remains."

She never received any reply. Yet, when a man dies on the scaffold, if his mother asks for his body after his execution, nobody dares to deny it to her.

CHAPTER XL

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

LITTLE by little, to the great satisfaction of his entourage, the Duke of Reichstadt seemed to be turning into an Austrian prince.

This desirable result was not achieved without difficulty; but it certainly appeared to be in sight.

He had been expansive. He became reserved, somewhat shy, and adept, if not at deceit, at least at concealing his thoughts. Feeling that he was spied upon day and night, he learnt the meaning of distrust himself and to appreciate the value of silence.

His tutors flattered themselves that they had killed the Napoleon in him. They thought they could go as far as they liked. A year after his father's death, Foresti got him to write an essay about the geography of Saint Helena.

At the beginning of the summer of 1823, Marie Louise decided to take a trip to Austria. The year before, being pregnant by Neipperg for the third time, she had had to stay in Parma. She had given birth to a daughter, who died.

She arrived in Vienna on June 6th. It was three years since she had last kissed her son; and meanwhile Napoleon had died.

A mother, however little of a mother she may be, cannot fail to touch the heart of a son. The boy, yearning

for affection, was delighted to see his mother. Marie Louise took him with her to the castle of Laxenburg, then to Baden, and finally to Persenbeug, where the Imperial family were in residence for most of the summer.

The duke spent several happy weeks at Persenbeug. He was on holiday, etiquette was relaxed, and he had his mother with him. Neipperg was there too; but in the boy's eyes he was simply the grand chamberlain of the Court of Parma, the first in precedence and the most respectful of the duchess's subjects.

Marie Louise returned to Parma on September 3rd. Her son begged her to take him with her; but she refused. The presence of this boy of twelve, with his observant eyes, would be an embarrassment to her.

The Duke of Reichstadt witnessed his mother's departure with a heavy heart. Then he went back to his cage at Schönbrunn, whose door had been set ajar for him only for a few weeks.

Still, during the summer, something had happened that gave him great delight. His grandfather appointed him a cadet. This rank enabled him to wear military dress: a close-fitting little uniform with a shako surmounted by a tuft.

He was already quite a dandy and very careful of his person. He held himself erect, with shoulders squared and head high. He carried his cane with an air, and set off his flowered waistcoat with a watch-chain. He danced charmingly; but he was no singer. He had no ear for music, except that of drums and trumpets.

He was interested in anything which would prepare him, directly or indirectly, for a soldier's career. He flung himself enthusiastically into the most violent physical exercises: running, jumping, wrestling. He challenged his cousins to wrestle, and, though they were older than he

was, floored them. He rode on horseback till he tired himself, and learned to swim in a few lessons. At his first swimming-lesson, he jumped into the water and was fished out gasping and frozen.

"I thought I was going to be drowned," he said, "but I wanted to show the people who were watching me that I wasn't afraid."

When he appeared in a drawing-room, he looked so handsome, so aristocratic, that all the women wanted to kiss him and keep him beside them. They saw in him either the son of whom they had dreamed, or the lover he would one day become. They admired his gracefulness, his ease of manner, his natural distinction. But he shunned their homage.

"My place is with men," he said.

He could already hold his own in conversation, and he was quick at repartee. One day a lady of honor, very flirtatious but with fading charms, was talking to him about France.

"It must be a very fine country," he said, innocently.

The lady looked him up and down. With pointed reference to Napoleon, she said, drily:

"Yes; but it was much finer before you were born."

The duke stood squarely in front of her.

"And so were you!" he retorted.

Lace handkerchiefs and fans stifled the company's laughter. The boy's rudeness earned him a reprimand; but it helped his reputation.

When the incident was reported to Metternich, he frowned and muttered:

"It's an obvious instance of that cursed French wit."

Here was another nasty weed to be uprooted. There were not many left, for the teachers who surrounded the duke

were vigilant. Dietrichstein, in fact, had chosen good masters for him.

Nevertheless, their pupil did not satisfy them entirely. He showed himself assiduous only in the study of modern history and of anything that had to do with war. In addition, he knew the military code by heart.

Towards the end of 1824, the boy suffered a grievous loss. Matthew von Collin, his favorite teacher, died suddenly of pneumonia. He was almost immediately replaced by Joseph Obenaus, a councilor of Lower Austria, who was entrusted with teaching the duke Latin, philosophy and history.

The pupil did not benefit by the change. His new teacher was a gloomy, irritable, irascible person. He was an odd mixture of hot temper and cold calculation. With the role of the pedagogue he combined that of the spy, shifty-eyed and sharp-eared.

But by this time the duke had an ally. On November 24th, 1824, his uncle, the Archduke Francis Charles, had married the Princess Sophie of Bavaria, the youngest of the Empress's half-sisters. In this way the boy's "dear uncle," who had once burned Marie Louise's doll, had become his own father's brother-in-law.

What a welcome surprise awaited the Duke of Reichstadt when, for the first time, he found himself in the presence of the new archduchess! Could any boy have an aunt better fitted to inspire admiration and affection?

Sophie was only nineteen, and she had all the prettiness of a bird, with its grace on the wing, its delicacy of line. Her neck had the curve of a stem carrying a corolla a little too heavy for it. Her auburn hair, in curls framing her face, seemed to have a light of its own under the lace which covered it. Her large eyes bore witness to an affectionate, straightforward soul. She was clad in a simple

muslin gown. She fluttered through life unconstrained, with a laugh on her lips, dancing on air, the living image of youth and grace.

Despite the six years which separated their ages, when they met Sophie and Franz felt that they were made for one another. The boy yearned for affection. Sophie asked nothing better than to give it to him. She held out her hands to him, and then clasped him in her arms.

"My dear boy!" she exclaimed. "My dear, my dear!"

The boy responded with one word: a word that hitherto had had no meaning for him and been of no use to him; a word that evoked the affection to which every child has a right, but which he had never known.

"Mamma!" he called her.

So it was that he gave his heart to Sophie.

Metternich and the Emperor were alone together in the Emperor's study. The audience which Francis granted to his Chancellor every day was coming to an end.

The sovereign was seated at his desk. He had aged. His face looked longer than ever, with his straight, gray hair parted on either side of it. The pouches under his eyes sagged still more deeply.

In front of him, Metternich held himself stiffly in his gold bespangled uniform. He wore a dark coat, white breeches, silk stockings and buckled shoes, and the ram of the Order of the Golden Fleece hung from his neck. He had gone bald with the passing years, and his shining pate was shaped like an egg.

The Emperor's hands, once so delicate, were wasted with age. He assembled a sheaf of documents and handed them to his Minister.

"You may file these reports. I've read them with great satisfaction. Our police-work is good, Metternich."

The Chancellor took the papers and bowed in silence. Then Francis took up an envelope which he had just sealed and showed it to his Minister.

"What do you think of my new seal?"

Metternich bent his pale, impenetrable face over the parchment.

"Your Majesty is inimitable. The impasto is delicate. The engraving is clear. There isn't a flaw."

"It's a new wax I'm using."

"It yields astonishing results."

In quite sprightly style, the Emperor went on:

"Do you remember the seals which the French affixed to the treaty of Lunéville? What a disgrace they were! They realized it when they saw mine."

Metternich half-closed his prominent eyes. An ironical glance filtered between his heavy lids.

"Still, it was a pity that the treaty cost Your Majesty so much."

The Emperor's spirits sank. He nodded, woefully.

"It did indeed. We lost the Low Countries and a good part of Italy. But that's all been settled since...."

There was a silence, haunted by the memory of Napoleon. It was always like this. Francis could never look back on affairs of State without the shade of the cursed Corsican rising before him. He changed the conversation.

"By the way, Metternich, what's the latest news from Parma?"

"Quite satisfactory, Sire. After visiting Genoa and Milan, the archduchess has gone on to Naples and Palermo. Your Majesty need have no concern about her journey. General Neipperg is in attendance...."

"So Marie Louise wrote to me. She also told me that Neipperg's health was giving her great alarm. He has a

cold of which he can't get rid, he coughs, and he's getting thin...."

"He overtaxes himself," said Metternich, with a straight face. "For that matter, we must admit that he administers the duchy excellently. Order reigns in Parma, and the people are quite contented."

The Emperor sighed.

"We were fortunate in our choice of him....My poor little girl! Life owed her some compensation after her willingness to sacrifice herself to save the Empire...."

Metternich stood rigid, with his flesh suddenly creeping at this too obvious reminder of the sacrifice of which he had been the instigator. The Emperor abandoned this dangerous subject, and went on:

"I want to have a word or two with you about my grandson, Metternich. Does he get on all right with his new tutor?"

The Chancellor sank his chin in his white muslin cravat, and replied gravely:

"I think Your Majesty can only congratulate yourself on choosing Obenaus. Besides being a very competent teacher, he is devotion itself. He watches over the duke as though he were his own son. Are you aware, Sire, that he has broken the duke of the habit of wetting his bed? He got up twice every night for a fortnight to awaken the prince."

"For such attention I shall be duly grateful to him. But you don't tell me whether he is satisfied with his pupil."

"Not entirely, I must admit. You know the duke, Sire. You know how given he is to contradiction. He has great natural gifts; but one might almost say that he goes out of his way to do all he can to displease his masters. He is a born actor, and he excels at dissimulating his feelings. Just at the moment when he seems on the point of

giving way, he offers the stoutest resistance. He deliberately makes mistake after mistake in his essays, and it takes weeks of struggle to make him apply a rule of grammar correctly. His tutor, Dietrichstein, is driven to despair."

There was another silence. Then Francis glanced fearfully around him, lowered his voice, and asked:

"Now that we are alone, Metternich, tell me.... Does he ever talk about his father?"

A yellow gleam flared in Metternich's eyes.

"Never, Sire!"

The Emperor hesitated. Then he went on:

"But does he think about him?"

"Probably.... Who is to stop him?"

"You keep yourself well informed about him, Metternich?"

"I have no control over his thoughts; but I can answer for his acts.... Dietrichstein makes a report to me every day, and all the servants in the duke's household are in the pay of the police.... He can do nothing without our being told...."

The Emperor reflected for a moment or two. Then he continued:

"I've long wanted to discuss this matter with you, Metternich. It's a delicate one, I know.... I don't think that the prince ought to be kept in systematic ignorance about his father. To hide everything about Napoleon from his son would mean arousing his son's suspicions. It strikes me as essential, in fact, to present Napoleon to him as a great general and an organizer of genius. At the same time, skillful advantage should be taken of the opportunity to display before him all the misfortunes which, as a soldier carried away by ambition, Napoleon brought upon his country: the ruination of France—the loss of her best sons on the battlefields of Europe."

"I share your opinion, Sire. So does Dietrichstein. He has prepared for his pupil selected extracts from the *Memoirs* which Gourgaud and Montholon wrote relating their experiences in Saint Helena. Obenaus's commentaries will do the rest."

The Emperor nodded.

"And now," he went on, "I think that the time has nearly come when my grandson will be old enough to receive the legacy left him by his father."

Despite his self-control, Metternich jumped.

"What, Sire? Would you dream of letting the duke have the sword Napoleon carried at Austerlitz, the cloak he wore at Marengo, his camp beds, his medals, and all his other personal possessions? Why, there is not one of them which does not recall a defeat of our armies, a humiliation for Austria!"

"I have, of course, considered the question from that point of view, Metternich. But are not a dead man's wishes sacred?"

The Chancellor drew himself up to his full height. He raised his voice.

"And what about reasons of State, Sire? No moral question, no family affection, not even religion itself, can prevail when the fate of the Empire is at stake...."

Francis hung his head. Metternich went on:

"Sire, we should avoid filling the duke with false hopes or nurturing the least ambition in him. From that point of view, anything which came to him from his father could only awaken in him dreams which would be a danger to the peace of Europe.... We are under obligations to Louis XVIII.... It was bad enough in itself to give the prince certain books. For my part, I should have been less generous."

The Emperor raised his head.

"What do you mean, Metternich?"

The Chancellor fumbled in his coat-pocket and pulled out a piece of paper.

"Here," he said, "is a recent essay by the duke. He was given the following subject: 'Write a speech by Hannibal to his troops before crossing the Alps....' Be good enough to look at it, Sire."

The Emperor bent over the sheet of paper, and read:

"Soldiers, your country has a right to expect great things of you. Will you justify its expectations?...You have more battles to fight, more cities to storm, more rivers to cross. Is there any man among you whose courage fails him?...."

With his nostrils quivering, Metternich said to his Sovereign:

"Sire, do not these words awaken an echo in you?... Search your memory....Do you not remember the proclamation which Napoleon addressed to his army in 1796, at the gates of Italy?

> "'Soldiers, you are in rags, you are badly fed, the government owes you much, and it cannot give you anything....'

"Napoleon's proclamation wound up:

> "'Soldiers of the army of Italy, will you fail in courage and constancy?...'"

The Emperor had gone as gray as ashes.

"That's enough!" he growled.

But Metternich went on, in a cutting tone of voice:

"Your Majesty must forgive me....But it was those words that cost us Arcole, Rivoli, and later Marengo....

The son is already taking his father as his model. It is promising, is it not?"

When Metternich had gone, the Emperor sat for a few moments staring before him, with his grandson's essay crumpled up in his hand. Then he got up, left his study, and made his way through galleries and up two flights of stairs to the door of the Duke of Reichstadt's apartments.

At the sight of his sovereign, Foresti proposed to announce him to his pupil.

"Do nothing of the kind," said the Emperor. "Where is he?"

"In his bedroom, Sire."

"I'll go there."

As he was on the point of entering the room, the Emperor came to a halt.

The boy, already as tall as a man of medium height, was walking up and down the room. The door stood ajar, and his grandfather could see him. The duke, who was wearing a dark tail-coat, walked with his head down and his hands behind his back, with a shambling step. Sometimes he stopped for a moment, with one foot forward. Then he went on with his walk.

Little by little, the Emperor fell back from the door. He felt as though a ghost had risen on the threshold and thrust him back without even touching him.

That figure! That gait! A shiver ran down the Emperor's back.

"He walks just like his father," he muttered. "Yes, he walks just like Napoleon."

CHAPTER XLI

FIRST PROMOTION

IT was in the course of the winter of 1826 that the Duke of Reichstadt experienced the first attacks of an illness which was soon to become worse.

He had grown three inches during the past year, and his puberty tired him. Doctor Goelis, his usual medical attendant, ordered him to rest and subjected him to strict treatment. The prince was a difficult patient. Dietrichstein had to write to Marie Louise to invoke her maternal authority.

In the month of February 1827, after seeming to recover, the duke fell ill again. He coughed and had rather a high temperature. Meanwhile Goelis had died. His successor, Doctor Staudenheim, prescribed powders and poultices, and prohibited dancing and physical exercise.

In the spring the prince was able to resume his usual occupations. He went for a walk in the Prater every day. He attended reviews with his grandfather. In the evenings, he went to the Burgtheater, or spent his time with Sophie or the Empress Caroline Augusta, who interested herself in him, lent him books, and treated him as a young man.

But in the course of the summer, at Baden, he had a relapse. He fainted at the Imperial table, and had to be taken back to Schönbrunn, where he spent several days

in bed. He was pale and thin, and his voice became hoarse. His arms and legs, attached respectively to a narrow chest and a small pelvis, looked too big for his body. Having little appetite, he did not eat much. If he was not watched, he behaved imprudently.

Staudenheim diagnosed him as having "a tendency to scrofula and a predisposition to phthisis of the windpipe." He prescribed cold baths and a substantial diet, and forbade horse-riding, swimming and walking in rain or chilly weather.

This queer treatment yielded rather good results. In the month of November 1827, Dietrichstein was able to report an improvement in the duke's health to Marie Louise, who had pleaded intestinal troubles as an excuse for not coming to Vienna that year.

Nevertheless, despite all the precautions with which he was surrounded, during the winter the duke contracted bronchitis. He was kept in his room and stuffed with medicine. It did not occur to anybody that in Parma he would find a climate more suited to his weak chest.

He did not recover till the spring. As the days got warmer, he picked up strength, and his enterprising spirit came back to him. He wanted to take up military service at once. But Count Dietrichstein was afraid that the fatigue of army life might be disastrous to the boy, who was very pale, very thin, and at the age of seventeen already measured over six feet.

But the duke was insistent. So, on June 30th, 1828, his tutor drew up a lengthy report to the Emperor, in which he set forth his fears, and asked the Emperor to postpone the emancipation of his pupil.

"It would be a great mistake," he wrote, "to let the prince go out into the world and expose himself to extreme fatigue before his strength is ready to stand it."

The Emperor agreed that Dietrichstein was right, and the duke, despite his entreaties, had to bow to his grandfather's will. Happily his mother arrived just at the right time to take his mind off his troubles. He went to meet her at Melk, and accompanied her from there to Schönbrunn.

There, on August 17th, he experienced one of the greatest joys of his life.

Before dinner, the Emperor had a long conversation with Marie Louise. During dinner, the young man was surprised to find that the whole company was looking at him. The persistent smiles ended by embarrassing him. The company included Count Dietrichstein and General Neipperg, who seemed to have aged ten years in the last two.

After dinner, the Emperor assembled his own party as usual. Then, just as everybody else was withdrawing, he summoned his grandson.

"You've wanted something for a very long time, haven't you, Franz?" he asked.

"I, Sire?" stammered the prince, with a blush.

"Yes. Two years ago, your mother asked me to give you a lieutenant's commission. I refused. Herr Dietrichstein told me that your work did not deserve such a favor...."

The Emperor paused for a moment to give more weight to his words.

"But, this year, your tutors are satisfied with you. So, to show you how pleased I am, I appoint you captain in my light infantry regiment."

If he had received his baptism of fire from a score of batteries of guns, the new officer could not have been more upset. His throat felt tight, he was weak at the knees, and he scarcely knew what he was doing. He found himself receiving the congratulations of the whole Imperial family. In a daze, he was passed on from one to

another. Kisses and embraces served as his baptism of fire instead of cannon-balls and bullets.

Once he was alone, he jumped for joy. His first concern was to write to Captain Foresti.

> "MY VERY DEAR COMRADE,
>
> "I hasten to tell you about the happiest event in my life, which, to be brief, is as unexpected as it is delightful; an event which paves the way for many things; an event which has suddenly made me the happiest of men...."

His pen danced across the paper. Captain! At the age of seventeen, he was a captain, just like Foresti, who was fifty-two. Before long he would be a general. Already he felt upon his brow the burning breath of fame.

CHAPTER XLII

THE DEATH OF NEIPPERG

IN Parma Marie Louise was living through some of the most harrowing hours of her life.

During the past few months she had watched her dear Neipperg, whom she had secretly married after Napoleon's death, wasting away from day to day. On their return to Parma in the month of October 1828, he fell ill on the way and had to be carried in a litter. He got thin, his cheeks fell in, and he became a mere shadow of himself. Heart attacks which prostrated him succeeded one another at closer and closer intervals. Blistering, blood-letting, even extract of soot taken in large doses, brought him no more than passing relief.

Marie Louise was overwhelmed.

"I feel that I, too, am dying with him little by little," she wrote to her father.

At the beginning of January 1829, Neipperg seemed better. But, at the end of the month, he suddenly grew worse. His attacks of suffocation were renewed, and fever wasted him away. He died on February 22nd.

For all his fortune, he left a few louis in a drawer and a cardboard box full of orders and decorations.

Marie Louise's despair was pitiable. She had lost, in her own words, "the best of husbands, the most faithful of friends, and all her earthly happiness." She commanded an

elaborate funeral for her best beloved, and ordered a carrara marble monument to him.

But the Emperor put a brake on too dramatic a display of her despair, and refused her permission to wear mourning for her husband. She had to bow to her father's will; for she depended only on him to look after her two children by Neipperg.

She never stopped lamenting him, and remained doleful and inconsolable everywhere she went. When she talked about Neipperg her eyes filled with tears—and she was always talking about him. She put away from her everything that did not remind her of her beloved. She had forgotten all about Paris, and preserved no memory of her life in France. She could not even remember the ladies who had been attached to her service, and, if their names were mentioned, she had to ask what they looked like and how they talked.

A month and a half after Neipperg's death, she gave audience to a Frenchman, Baron de Vitrolles. Speaking to him about her years in Paris, she said to him:

"Alas, until now I was very happy here. My earlier life seemed only a bad dream."

Finally, in the month of August, she tore herself away from her palace, where her grief preyed upon her, and went to Geneva to take the waters at Aix.

Not for a moment did she think of going to Vienna to see her son. She knew that in him she would find a judge ready to pronounce severe sentence upon her. As a mother, she feared to blush under her son's eyes.

It was the Emperor Francis who had undertaken the thankless task of telling the Duke of Reichstadt that his mother had married again.

He did so at the beginning of March 1829, as tactfully as possible. He told the prince that his mother's second

marriage had taken place in September 1821, and that two children had been born of her union with Neipperg.

Stricken by the shock, the prince sagged in his seat, just as a badly wounded man doubles himself up. He went white and clenched his teeth. But he said nothing. He asked no questions about the children's age. His silence struck the Emperor and Dietrichstein as most alarming.

But, once he was alone, he gave free vent to his feelings. Astonishment, indignation and shame shared his heart. He felt that the most sacred, the purest thing he had in him, his memory of his father, had been soiled forever.

Was it possible? Could his mother, Marie Louise, Empress of the French, have so completely forgotten Napoleon? Had she really dared to replace him with a minor general, a courtier, a mere major-domo of a duchy? What a denial of his memory!

He wished he could have in his heart only affection and indulgence for his mother. But he could find there nothing but pity and contempt. The discovery hurt him. So he experienced real relief when he learned that Marie Louise had given up her intention to visit Vienna that year.

Henceforth, he felt, the phantom of Neipperg must always rise between his mother and himself. It turned him more definitely towards the outlaw who had been sacrificed to the hatred of Europe.

Little by little, his eyes became opened. He discovered the traps which had held his soul prisoner ever since he was a child. He realized that a conspiracy had been hatched by a hundred unseen accomplices to poison his mind.

Now the network of deceit gave way, link by link. The darkness in which he had struggled became less dense. In the depths of it flickered a light towards which all the strength of his being impelled him. Was it not Napoleon's

star, which, after all these years of eclipse, had reappeared to guide the steps of his son?

The course of events was soon to chase away the last shadows and hasten his steps towards that light.

At the beginning of 1829, a young French poet, Barthélemy, arrived in Vienna with the intention of presenting to the Duke of Reichstadt a copy of a poem entitled *Napoleon in Egypt,* which he had written in collaboration with Méry.

Barthélemy was received by Dietrichstein. The duke's tutor represented to the poet that the policy of France and Austria alike was opposed to a foreigner, and above all a Frenchman, being introduced to the prince. Barthélemy was astonished that the prince should be surrounded by such precautions. He remarked, somewhat rudely:

"Then it would appear, Monsieur le Comte, that Napoleon's son is far from being so free as we in France imagine."

Dietrichstein shook his tired head. He replied, quietly:

"The prisoner is not a prisoner, but . . . But he is in a very peculiar position. . . ."

Barthélemy was persistent. He made efforts in all directions. But he failed to obtain the audience he desired. He had to content himself with going to the Hoftheater one evening and getting a distant glimpse of the Duke of Reichstadt, whose pale face stood out against the dark background of his box.

On his return to Paris, still full of resentment and haunted by the memory of what he had seen in the Hoftheater, Barthélemy wrote and published a long poem entitled *The Son of the Man.* In it he painted a picture of the prince in the blackest light. He represented him as undermined by some strange, suspicious disease and already in the shadow of death.

After covertly accusing Austria of slowly poisoning Napoleon's son, he went on to adjure the prince to pull himself together, maintain his father's tradition, and take refuge in France, which was ready to welcome him.

The stir which this poem caused in Paris was equaled only by the indignation which it aroused in Vienna. The King of France thought fit to arrest its author. Barthélemy was put on trial and, on June 29th, 1829, sentenced to three months' imprisonment.

His trial made the echoes ring. It was attended by Victor Hugo and General Gourgaud. His incriminating poem acted like a very dry faggot flung on a smoldering fire. All at once, the flame of Bonapartism sprang up again, and spread crackling until it licked the feet of the throne on which Charles X wriggled, very ill at ease.

Barthélemy's poem came to the knowledge of the Duke of Reichstadt. His tutors thought him so far prejudiced against France that it would do him no harm to read it. They were wrong.

To be sure, Barthélemy had painted a far from flattering portrait of the duke. Moreover, the author's attack on the Court of Vienna shocked the duke in his feeling of affection for his grandfather. But several passages in it awakened mysterious echoes in him and thrilled him to the soul.

"Grandson of Cæsar, Emperor's son,
Heir of the earth, born King of Rome,
Today you are but the son of the Man.
Yet for that name obscure
What king's son would not change his heritage?
Are you content to bear a name that's worth a crown
Without a thought to win it for yourself?"

With his head in his hands, the duke meditated for a long time.

So they thought about him in France? On the other side of the Rhine, he was not merely the Duke of Reichstadt, the semi-bastard whose birth was kept hidden as though it were a disgrace. In the eyes of a whole nation, he was the King of Rome, Napoleon's son. Millions of men put their faith, their hopes, in him.

He did not yet know how he could escape from his prison and answer the summons of these men of his own blood; but he felt sure that he would find a way some day. Then would strike the great hour when, before all the world, Fate would bring him and his legend face to face....

He must make himself ready. The example of his father would serve as his guide. Napoleon had been a great general. He would try to follow in his footsteps. He exerted himself to do so, with such poor means as he had at his disposal.

At the end of June 1829, he finally obtained permission to take part in the regimental drill of the battalion of grenadiers commanded by Prince Gustavus Wasa.

Three or four days a week, he got up at four o'clock in the morning. An hour later, he arrived at Mauer, where the battalion was quartered.

Sitting squarely on his horse, in his tight-fitting uniform of captain in the light infantry, the prince drilled his men, issuing his orders in a firm voice. Sightseers gathered all around the parade-ground to watch him handling his detachment quickly and decisively. Sometimes cheers greeted Bonaparte's son.

To the sound of trumpets, amid the clash of arms and the tramp of marching feet, the Eaglet tried his unfledged wings.

CHAPTER XLIII

OPENING HEART

SEATED at the window of her drawing-room in the Hofburg, Sophie was painting a water-color of a bouquet of flowers. From time to time she rose, stepped back from her easel and narrowed her eyes to judge her work. Finally she laid her brush aside and looked around her.

In this somber, unfriendly palace, it was only in this room that she felt really at home. She surveyed with satisfied eyes its simple, cozy arrangement, which was her own doing: the unadorned mahogany furniture; the low couches; the little tables, with a few albums littered about them; the piano on which the last roses from Schönbrunn were withering.

She glanced up at the sky, across which the autumnal wind swept heavy clouds that seemed to drink in the daylight like sponges. They were pierced by the sharp arrowhead of a flight of birds winging south.

Sophie took up her brush and went on with her painting. All at once, she heard the door open behind her. She looked in a mirror in front of her, and caught sight of the Duke of Reichstadt.

"Good day, Franz!" she cried, gayly, without looking round.

The young prince had stopped on the threshold. He held

on to the jamb. With his eyes closed and his mouth open, he gasped for breath.

"Come on in," cried Sophie, "and shut the door behind you!"

The prince opened his eyes, but he saw nothing of the delicate picture presented by the girl sitting at her easel: her soft hair powdered with light; her straight, white neck; her aristocratic profile outlined against the window.

Wondering at his silence, Sophie turned round. She sprang to her feet.

"Franz! What's the matter?"

He stood before her, pale and trembling, with his face haggard and his hair in disorder. His dark uniform heightened the lividness of his complexion and the black rings round his eyes.

"Good heavens!" she murmured, taken aback. "What has happened? You frighten me!"

She took him by the hand. He let her lead him as though he were a child, and sank down to a couch.

"Are you ill, Franz? Shall I get help? Would you like me to ring for some tea?"

"No, no, don't worry!" said the duke, with an effort. "I shall be all right in a moment...."

His eyes were staring, and a fine sweat gathered on his brow. Mechanically, he rubbed his long, pale hands together. He had poor circulation, and his finger-tips had turned yellow.

Sophie sat down beside him and put her arm around his shoulders.

"What's happened, Franz?... You frighten me, I tell you!... Aren't you going to talk to me? Aren't we friends any more?"

He looked at her vaguely. He murmured:

"Now I know.... I know all about it."

"All about what? What do you know?"

He flung the words at her as though he were tearing pieces out of himself.

"All about my mother.... All about Neipperg.... All about the children...."

It was Sophie's turn to go pale. She felt that the worst had happened. She tried to conjure it away by lying.

"But you don't know anything about them.... You shouldn't get yourself into such a state over mere gossip."

The duke shook his curly head obstinately.

"It isn't mere gossip.... This time I know the truth."

In a hoarse voice, he went on, hurriedly:

"The other day, at table, the Archduke John made some reference to my half-sister's age. The Empress at once slurred it over, so hastily that my suspicions were suddenly aroused.... I said to myself: 'Have they been lying to me?' I made up my mind to find out. But whom could I ask? Everybody around me was bound to keep his mouth shut about such a thing.

"Then, on my way back from Mauer just now, I met Gustavus Neipperg. We've always been friends, Gustavus and I. We played together when we were children. He's a nice fellow. He's just arrived from Parma. I said to myself that he was bound to know. I led the conversation round naturally to the subject which was worrying me. I laid a trap for him. I said that of course I knew all about it. Then, without waiting to be asked, he told me what everybody knew—except myself...."

"But good heavens, Franz, surely you didn't believe him?"

"He gave me proof. He gave me dates.... My half-sister, Albertine, was born nearly four years before my father died. When Napoleon breathed his last, my mother was pregnant with William...."

Sophie was aghast. She could find no words to repair the harm that had been done. What was the good of lying? Should she seek excuses for Marie Louise? She felt that any defense of her would be in vain.

"And then," she said, softly, "you came straight to me?"

"No, not straight, Sophie. My first thought was for my father. Did he know? Or did he at least suspect? Had he any presentiment of this thing: the worst harm that could be done to him, by the last person in the world who ought to do it? I went up to my apartments. I was reeling like a drunken man. In my bedroom, I lay down, to read my father's will, just to make sure....

"Oh, what a relief, Sophie! He never knew. Until his last breath he loved his wife. He believed in her. He wrote these words:

> "'I have always had occasion to be well pleased with my very dear wife, Marie Louise. I preserve till my last moment the most affectionate feelings towards her....'"

Sophie stared at him in astonishment.

"What a tone you said that in, Franz!"

"I said it as one says things one knows by heart.... There are plenty of other things I know by heart.... I'm not a child any more, Sophie. Suffering has made a man of me before my time—a man, I tell you!..."

He stopped, stayed silent for a few moments, and then returned to the idea which wrung his heart.

"I was hurt enough a few months ago, when the Emperor told me that Marie Louise had married again. It was bad enough, wasn't it, for me to hear all at once that the Empress of the French had sunk so low and so completely denied my father's memory? But I held myself in.

I didn't ask any questions. After all, she was my mother. ...I had no suspicion....

"But now I know the truth. Just imagine it! Within a few months after they parted, my mother had already so far forgotten Napoleon as to throw herself into the arms of another man....She had no pride in her soul, no faithfulness in her body, no memory in her heart. And that woman is my mother!...While Napoleon was dying in Saint Helena, she did nothing to ease his pain. She lived happily with her one-eyed lover, her parrot and her little dog, bringing bastards into the world."

He buried his face in his hands and burst into tears.

"Franz, Franz!" cried Sophie.

She drew him to her and took him into her arms. With one hand she stroked his hair. On her other hand she could feel his hot tears falling.

"My dear," she murmured, "my dear!"

She was shocked by his suffering. Its violence gave her the measures of its ravages. A kind of fright took hold of her. If a son could pass such a terrible judgment on his mother, he must have made up his mind about her once and for all.

"Calm yourself, Franz," she kept on saying, "calm yourself!"

She felt possessed with intense pity for him; and her girlish affection was ready to transform it into comfort. The confidence in her to which Franz had just borne witness filled her with pride.

Little by little, she felt him relax against her. Her embrace, the warmth of her body, the softness of her touch had done more than any words could do to pour balm on his wounds.

At length he raised his blue eyes to hers, as clear as a rainwashed sky.

"Forgive me for making such a fool of myself, Sophie," he said. "But it hurt me so much. All at once, I've lost my mother.... I've nothing left but my father's memory, and you.... You're the one person here who can understand me...."

"It makes me very happy, very proud, to hear you say so, Franz; but I don't deserve much credit for that.... I have the utmost admiration for Napoleon. At home, at the Bavarian Court, we always had a great affection for France."

"Ah, if only my mother had had the same feeling for France as you, a foreigner! If only she had had a little constancy, a little fidelity, Neipperg's wiles would have failed...."

He stopped for a moment. Then he went on, with his resentment flaring up again:

"When I think of that fellow Neipperg! A second-rate general, of whom my father made a laughing-stock on the battlefield! A man to whom he would have been ashamed to entrust the conduct of a campaign! And it was this paltry soldier who usurped the place of the greatest general of all time with his wife!... And what about myself? Do you know, Sophie, I wrote to the man as a friend?..."

Sophie put up her hands to stop his flow of words.

"But that was before you knew about his relations with the duchess...."

"That may be. But when I think that I, Napoleon's son, thanked my mother's lover for his kindness! When I think that I asked him for advice!... Sophie, I cannot recall those letters of mine without rage and humiliation. I would sacrifice some of my blood never to have written them...."

He paused, his flesh creeping with disgust.

"Ah, my mother did well not to come to Vienna this year!"

Sophie shook her head gently.

"You mustn't judge her too harshly, Franz. Don't you know that she once had a hard time of it? Doesn't the sacrifice which was demanded of her then give her a right to a little indulgence now?..."

The prince looked away in embarrassment.

"Perhaps," he admitted, in a low voice. "But do you know all that my father, for his part, endured during his imprisonment? Do you know all that he suffered? I know it. And I know how much he loved me. I know that he died for me, as though he were on the cross."

"Who told you, Franz?"

"I know all about him, believe me. Of course, nobody ever told me. But there are such things as books.... At night, when I am alone in my room, I read the works of Las Cases, Montholon, Antommarchi, all those who went with him into exile and were present when he died.... I have seen him before my eyes. I have heard him speak to me. I have heard him tell me what he expected of me.... So I want to make myself worthy of him.... I don't know whether I shall ever rule over France; but I must hold myself in readiness."

Sophie's face lit up.

"Oh, I love to hear you talk like that, Franz! Yes, you must prepare yourself. You must be conscientious. You must work hard, too.... But, above all, you must take care of yourself, until you become strong and robust.... Promise me that you'll take more care of yourself. Don't be foolhardy. Don't go out in fog. Don't expose yourself to wet and cold...."

The duke nearly lost his temper.

"Oh, you're just like all women, with their maternal instinct! How can I harden myself if I do all that? I must

have fresh air and exercise. Do you want to make an old man of me? . . ."

"There's no question of that, Franz. . . . But you always overdo things. For example, when you're out riding, don't you gallop till you exhaust yourself? Is that reasonable? And you come back frowning, as though you always found misfortune awaiting you."

The prince laughed bitterly.

"Haven't I got good reason, Sophie? I'm Napoleon's son; and at the age of eighteen all I can do is command a company of Austrian grenadiers. Could anything be more cruel, more laughable? Then, when I get back to my apartments, instead of finding solitude, I am surrounded by servants whose one thought is to spy on me, by tutors who seem to go out of their way to exert their authority at my expense. . . ."

"No, that's not fair, Franz. Dietrichstein is devoted to you. He's strict with you, I know; but I'm sure he thinks he's acting in your best interests. . . . And then, you have the Empress. You have me. . . ."

Eagerly the prince seized Sophie's hand and raised it to his lips.

"Yes, I have you. . . . I have you alone to love me, you alone to understand me. But I see so little of you; and everybody else seems to have been put on earth only to make me suffer. . . . You mentioned my tutors. Do you know that only a few months ago Obenaus hit me with a hunting-crop?"

"What? He dared to hit you?" cried Sophie, horror-stricken.

"For nothing at all. And then, when I stood up to him, the swine whipped me like a dog—me, Napoleon's son! I nearly sprang at his throat."

Sophie bowed her head.

"Yes, sometimes one must hold in one's temper. One must stifle one's resentment...."

In his turn, Franz drew Sophie towards him.

"I'm a selfish fellow. I've been talking about myself all the time. But you're not happy either, I know. Has your husband become what he gave promise of when he used to play with me? Is he just a grown-up specimen of what he was when he was twelve? Is he still stupid, shifty and surly? And is he as jealous of me as ever?"

Sophie put her hand to his lips.

"Don't be so conceited, sir! If you want to know, my husband is much more in awe of me than I am of him. ...But we're not here to talk about him, but about you."

She walked over to the piano, picked up a few fallen petals of a rose, rubbed them in her hands, and then put her palms to the duke's nose.

"Isn't that a funny smell?"

"It's the smell of death...."

Sophie shuddered. The duke was given to these unexpected replies, which froze one to the soul. She sought to change the conversation.

"Franz, do you ever think about your future?"

The duke stared at her as though the question pained him.

"How can you ask me such a question, Sophie? Yes, I think about it. I never stop thinking about it, especially at night. I question Fate; but it always gives me the same answer. What can I expect from it—I, an Austrian princeling with clipped wings?"

"Have you so soon forgotten what your father said?"

"Last year, when I was out shooting at Weinzierl, two eagles came and hovered in the sky not far away. I waited, in hope. Perhaps they would fly over my head. Then a

shot made them take to flight, and I didn't see them again. Wasn't that a bad omen?"

"What a superstitious boy you are! Don't be so impatient, Franz. You're only eighteen. You must learn to wait...."

"Wait for what, Sophie? I am eating my heart out in inaction. If I don't do something, if I remain the good young man I am expected to be, how is the world to know that I exist? Every other day brings me some disappointment. I had hoped that Austria would be involved in the war which broke out between Russia and Turkey a few months ago; but now they have made peace. What a fine chance lost for me, Sophie! I have no choice of means. It is only war which can enable me to distinguish myself, to win promotion, to show what I am worth...."

Sophie stopped him, with a beseeching gesture.

"Be silent, Franz! How can you hope for war for your own advancement?...War is a source only of death and ruination. Don't you know that everything built up upon it soon collapses in general disaster?"

"Sophie, you talk like Dietrichstein, when he is speaking about my father...."

He held out his thin wrists, where the veins drew blue furrows between the tendons.

"It is the blood of Napoleon that flows there....Whatever I may do, it carries me like a torrent towards the same fate."

But Sophie was gently persistent.

"Times have changed, Franz....If your father could talk to you, he would counsel moderation. It is about France that you must think. Do you imagine that your throne there would be secure if you won it back by blood and fire?"

"Certainly not. I shall never go back to France unless

the whole nation summons me. I have no intention of intriguing against France. If I lent myself to factious intrigue, I should be false to the duty which my father's memory imposes on me."

"That is a wise decision, and a high-minded one."

"But probably it is based on an illusion. What do I know about France? Nothing, or at least not much. To be sure, I have some friends there. But are they so many as Barthélemy makes out in his poem? One must always distrust the dreams of poets.... The one sure thing is that a barrier has been raised between me and my native land. By whom? By Metternich, by my mother, by the Emperor, by other people.... Oh, I know, they say they act only for my good. But their concern for my future has taken the form of the most hateful kind of persecution...."

"You go too far, Franz. Everybody here is fond of you. Everybody wants to see you happy."

"People may be fond of me; but they are fond of me in the wrong way. In his will, my father left me his personal belongings, his books, his jewelry. Bertrand, Montholon and Marchand were to hand them over to me when I was sixteen.... I'm eighteen now. Why haven't they come to see me? They must have tried to reach me. Who denied Marchand the consolation of bringing me the watch-chain which he wove for me out of my father's hair? I have not been allowed even that. Ah, Sophie, Metternich and the Emperor Francis must have been very much afraid of my father, when, eight years after his death, they are still so scared of his greatcoat, a pair of his slippers, a lock of his hair!"

The duke started walking up and down the room, preyed upon by increasing excitement.

"But after all, do I need such things to remember him, to love him? Even in this country, at every step do not the

Anton Van Welie

"... NAPOLEON'S EXILED SON HAD A SOUL OF IRON IN A BODY OF STRAW ..."

sky, the stones, the trees talk to me about him? What about the score of victories he won on the battlefields of Austria? What about Austerlitz? What about Wagram? What about Lobau? Napoleon's shade still dwells in Schönbrunn, and it is ready to answer my summons...."

Sophie stared at him in astonishment. She found in him a man whom she had never suspected. He went on walking up and down, with disheveled hair and flashing eyes, hunching his shoulders just as Napoleon used to do when he was in a towering rage.

"So they think they can turn me into an Austrian colonel, do they? Ah, what a disillusionment awaits them! They have done everything to stop me remembering; but I remember despite them. My father's picture is in my heart. If they want to get rid of it, they will have to tear out my heart with it...."

In dismay, Sophie rushed at him and flung her arms around him.

"Stop, Franz, I beg of you! You'll make yourself ill...."

They stood face to face. Franz was a whole head higher than Sophie. The difference in their ages had ceased to matter. Their common way of looking at things, their common understanding of the world, put them on the same intellectual level.

Sophie raised her fine eyes, all aglow, to Franz. Her long lashes flickered over them, dewy with emotion.

It was now, for the first time, that Franz really noticed how pretty she was: the heavy coils of her hair; the sweetness of her lips; the grace, the whiteness of her neck, set off by a dark velvet ribbon. In her print gown, adorned with bright flowers, with sleeves which spread out like wings, she looked like his good fairy.

"You are going to be a great man, Franz," she mur-

mured. "I shall be proud of you. You will rule over France...."

He bent over her. His sufferings, his troubles, his anxieties seemed to dissolve in the brightness of the smile which Sophie bestowed upon him. He felt stronger, at peace with himself.

"Do you really think that I shall rule over France some day?" he asked.

"I am sure of it, Franz. I have faith in you."

They lived through that miraculous moment when the friendship that links a man and a woman is transformed into love.

With her two hands, Sophie brushed aside the fair curls which clustered around Franz's face. She took his pale face in her cool hands. In a grave tone of voice, as though she were taking a vow, she said:

"I love you, Franz.... Let me kiss you on that fine brow of yours...."

Franz closed his eyes.

"It is my father's brow," he said, with loving pride.

CHAPTER XLIV

A FATHER REFOUND

A CHILLY night hemmed in the Hofburg. At this late hour, everything in the old palace was dark and silent. Only one long rectangle of pale gold pierced the black front overlooking the main courtyard. The Duke of Reichstadt was sitting up in his apartments, consisting of three quite simple, modestly furnished rooms: a waiting-room, a drawing-room, a bedroom.

The prince sat at his desk. The light of a big oil-lamp strove with difficulty against the darkness gathered in the corners of the big room. In the gloom could be made out a broad bookcase, with a bust of the Emperor Francis on top of it; a panoply of arms mounted on a black wooden pedestal, and a relief plan of Marie Louise's palace at Sala.

When the duke raised his eyes, he could see, hanging on the wall, the portrait of his father painted by Gérard. Napoleon was in the uniform of colonel of the light infantry of the Guard. His hanging lock divided his thoughtful brow. His mouth was firm, with a droop of bitterness at the corners of the lips. Wherever his son went in the room, Napoleon's eyes followed him, brooding, melancholy.

Midnight had long since struck on the drawing-room clock, which represented two angels contemplating the sacred fire. The duke was reading, with his fingers buried

in his curly hair. Around him books were heaped: Ossian's songs; *Jerusalem Delivered;* and a whole pile recalling Napoleon's life, Antommarchi's and O'Meara's *Memoirs,* books by Montholon, Ségur, Bourienne and several other writers.

The duke was re-reading Las Cases's *Memorial of Saint Helena.* The hours went by. He was outside of Time, in another world. These books were his most precious possessions, for they gave him back his father.

Hitherto, when he ransacked his recollections, he had found nothing but a chaos, shapeless and somber. All that stood out from it was an immense palace, a great stir of soldiering, and two strong arms that lifted him up in the air. But what was his father really like?

When he appealed to his memory, only a shade, with no face, no reality, rose out of his past. Despite all his efforts, he could endow it with no warmth of coloring, no flesh and blood, no life, nothing derived from himself. How often his impotence had infuriated him!

But, little by little, the miracle had come to pass. The works of Las Cases, Montholon and Antommarchi had brought to life for him a true picture of Napoleon. Hitherto, he had had only a vague idea of what his father was like. It is true that, one day, when Obenaus had tried to belittle the Emperor of the French to him, Franz had retorted:

"The actions of great men cannot be weighed in ordinary scales."

But that had been an instinctive reaction rather than a conviction founded on facts.

Now, however, he knew. His memories, formerly shapeless and scattered, had flocked from the most distant points in his past. Some mysterious force had assembled them, grouped them, linked them together by that indestructible

cement: love. Little by little, with delighted surprise, Franz had seen his father's real figure rise out of the pages of his books. The statue came to life. It moved and had its being in broad daylight. Henceforth Franz felt the legend of Napoleon spread over him like a great wing that sheltered him and kept him warm.

Nothing now remained in darkness of all Napoleon's stupendous life: his childhood, his early years, his marriage to Josephine, his campaigns, his achievements, the dangers he had faced, the generosity he had shown. The prince had before him the soldier, the conqueror, the organizer, the man. He saw him at work, he saw him struggling, he saw him suffering. He followed him in his apotheosis. He was present day by day at his crucifixion. And here Franz felt a sense of shame which burnt him up.

While Napoleon had been pursuing his interminable way of the cross, with death for his sole horizon, Franz had been a little boy who lived carefree, laughing and playing. He had let himself be petted by the very people who had handed his father over to the executioner.

Little by little, he saw into the soul of his grandfather, of his mother, of all the people whom he had hitherto believed to be kind-hearted, whom he had respected and loved.

His various books put people and things in their true light. One day Napoleon, speaking to Las Cases, had recalled the trap into which he had been lured, with Marie Louise for bait.

"That marriage was my undoing, because I believed above all in Francis's religion, in his piety, in his morality, in his honor. I respected him fundamentally. I was cruelly undeceived."

These lines branded the Emperor of Austria.

And what about Marie Louise? Had she protested when

Napoleon was exiled to Saint Helena? Had she done anything to save him from his hard fate, or at least to alleviate it? She had done nothing. Not one act, not one word, not even one thought had been forthcoming from her on the outlaw's behalf. To the appeal of love, of memory, of fidelity, she had responded only by indifference, forgetfulness and betrayal.

As Franz had led Sophie to understand, he had made his choice. The living woman was dead to him. The dead man had come to life for him.

He went on with his reading. As usual, he lingered long over the plan of Napoleon's bedroom at Longwood.

"It was here that he lived," he murmured. "It was here that he suffered. My portrait was there. My marble bust stood on the mantelpiece."

The black lines of the plan, the paper itself, turned into reality. The duke gazed at the room exposed to his eyes: the couch; the little mahogany table at which his father breakfasted; the little camp-bed which was soaked with his sweat as he lay dying....

Scenes succeeded one another, revealing Napoleon in his most intimate moments. The duke saw his father standing up, stripped to the waist, shaving himself in the window-recess with his two valets on either side of him, Marchand holding brush and soap, Aly holding a mirror. He was obese, with little hair on his body, and his skin was white....

"Ah," sighed the duke, "why should I have to learn all this from strangers?..."

He closed his eyes. From Napoleon's whole life in exile exuded a love warm and potent as the sun's rays; as the light of a star still shines long after the star itself has ceased to be. It was the despairing love of a father who could do nothing for his son except suffer for him, sacri-

fice himself for him. This affection, ever alive, never appeased, Franz could divine in Napoleon's most trivial actions. Was it not obvious from the way in which he spoilt Bertrand's and Montholon's children?

"He thought only about me," his son murmured. "I was his one object in life. It was not to Hortense that he gave his suit, it was not to Napoleon Bertrand that he gave his watch. It was to me. It was not Arthur to whom he made a present of a pony. It was I. It was not Arthur whom he kissed so hard that the boy was frightened. It was I...."

The prince stood up, went and laid his burning brow against the window-pane, and looked out. The steps of the sentry walking up and down the courtyard outside the guardroom echoed in the frosty air. The moon had risen, and, when the sentry passed out of the shadow into the light, the steel of his bayonet flashed.

Franz went back to his desk, and opened Antommarchi's *Memoirs*. Hour by hour, he watched the progress of Napoleon's endless agony. Then he gazed at his father lying on his death-bed, delivered from the evil of mankind, handsome and fresh-complexioned, without a line on his face, at last at peace in the assurance of his triumph over oblivion.

Napoleon's son attended his laying out, the post-mortem on him, the taking of his death-mask. He took part in the vigil over him, and then his placement into three coffins, one of tin, one of lead, and one of mahogany, fitting inside one another, with the cloak which he had worn at Marengo spread over the outer coffin by Marchand. His son followed his funeral procession, under a blazing sun, whose light threw into high relief the many-colored rags of the Chinese, Negroes and half-breeds who had flocked from every part of the island.

The whole garrison of three thousand men were under

arms, and guns thundered. Bertrand and Montholon, in full-dress uniform, and Marchand and Napoleon Bertrand acted as pall-bearers. Behind them came Madame Bertrand, the children, and the servants. Archambault led Napoleon's horse.

The funeral procession reached the Geranium Valley, where a grave had been dug near the Torbett fountain. The heavy coffin sank into it with a dull thud. There were no speeches. Slowly the crowd dispersed....

Now Napoleon's son knelt at the slab, with no inscription, under which his father rested, mourned only by the interlacing branches of two weeping willows.

The prince could not tear himself away from his books. He seemed to be surrounded by warm breathing, mysterious whispering. Shades that had substance brushed against him, hovered over his head.

At random, he opened one of the volumes of the *Memorial of Saint Helena.* His eyes encountered this passage:

> "Sire, it was willed that your posterity should not be limited to the King of Rome. The secret story of your life gave him two elder brothers. One of them was the offspring of a beautiful foreign lady with whom you were very much in love in a distant land. The other was the fruit of a nearer intimacy, in your own capital.... Both of them are living images of their father."

Leaning his head on his hand, with his eyes far away, the duke mused for a while.

"So," he murmured, "I have two brothers....Two brothers like Napoleon....I wonder where they are. Are they still alive? Are they freer, happier than I am? And am I less my father's living image than they are?"

The idea filled him with pain. He rose to his feet, picked

up the lamp, crossed the room, and held the lamp aloft in front of Napoleon's portrait.

He stood there for some time, with the lamp in his hand, anxiously studying his father's face. Then he planted himself before a mirror, brushed back his curly hair, and fearfully examined his own pale face, with its dark-rimmed eyes.

From his father he had inherited his chin, his cheekbones, something of his brow. But all these features were weakened by his Austrian blood, just as a dash of wine is diluted in a glass of water.

The blue of his eyes, the curve of his lips, the shape of his head, belonged to his mother. From Marie Louise he had also inherited the fair complexion, the blonde hair, the tall stature and the narrow chest of the Habsburgs.

The realization of all this overwhelmed him. What would he not give to rid his face of that girlish air which humiliated him? What would he not give to oust from his body all that the descendants of the Emperor Charles V had put into it? What would he not give for a more virile nose, a higher complexion, a stronger jaw? What would he not give, in short, to be the living image of the man who had put all the kings of Europe in leash like a pack of hounds?

He went back to Napoleon's portrait. He clasped his hands together. As though he were praying to it, he said:

"Father! Don't you recognize me? Am I not your son—the son you always wanted? Father, I have nobody but you. Give me strength, give me courage, to show myself worthy of your example!"

Exhausted, he sank into an armchair. The night was coming to an end, and outside rose the murmur of the awakening city.

CHAPTER XLV

THE FRIEND

IT was March 1st, 1830. At Schönbrunn the Duke of Reichstadt, before a solemn board of examiners, was taking a final examination to round off his studies. His grandfather and the Empress had made a point of being present at this completion of his course.

In reply to questions about the code of military regulations, the duke was answering fluently. All at once, the Emperor pricked up his ears.

"Why are the church-bells ringing at this time of day?" he asked.

"Oh, it's an alarm-signal!" cried the Empress. She turned pale.

Almost immediately, the sound of guns thundered in the air. The people present stared at one another, seized with sudden anxiety.

"What does this mean?" asked Francis.

At this moment, a breathless officer entered the room.

"Sire," he gasped, "the Danube has burst its banks. Bridges and embankments have been carried away. Already the suburbs are flooded. The alarm has been given."

He added that masses of ice, borne by the current, were knocking down the walls of houses. A number of people had been drowned.

The Emperor stood up.

"Come on," he said. "We must organize rescue work."

"I'll come with you," said the duke.

Francis glanced as his grandson and shook his head.

"You mustn't dream of such a thing in your present state of health, Franz."

"But, Grandfather, I can't stay here when all those poor people are in danger!"

"Look at yourself in that mirror, my boy. You're as white as a ghost, you've got a cough, and you've no strength. Staudenheim has forbidden your dancing and fencing. How can you face icy water?"

"It would be madness on your part, my dear Franz," said the Empress. "You'd only make yourself worse, without doing anybody any good.... Come, be reasonable!..."

Franz hung his head. It hurt him now more than ever not to be treated as a man. He rebelled against the bodily weakness which held him down.

"All right," he said, in a low voice, "I won't go. But let me give you all the money I've got. That's the least I can do to relieve the distress."

The duke seemed more or less restored to health when, on June 17th, he set off for Graz, in Styria, to join the Emperor, the Empress and his mother, whom he had not seen since Neipperg's death. Marie Louise had come from Laibach. She had traveled from Venice to Trieste by steamer, which was quite an event at the time.

As soon as he arrived at Graz, the duke lost no time in seeing his mother. He found her fleshy, pimply and doleful. Their expressions of affection lacked spontaneity and enthusiasm.

Nevertheless, the duke made no reference to the past. He stood in too much need of his mother's help to obtain his emancipation and a military household worthy of him.

Some days were spent in various ceremonies: religious celebrations, popular festivities, reviews and parades. One day, during a fireworks display, the duke heard voices shouting behind him: "Long live Napoleon!" But that did not stop him writing in his diary:

"The money spent on such displays is sheer waste. It would be much better to save it for charitable purposes or the founding of some useful institution."

On June 20th, just before the Emperor and his guests sat down to table, a young major was introduced to the Duke of Reichstadt.

"Freiherr Prokesch von Osten...."

Bowing before him, the duke saw an officer of about thirty-five, somewhat frail in appearance. He had a long, handsome face. His firm lips were clean-shaven. His thick, curly hair was parted in the middle. Despite his dark, bushy eyebrows, his face had an expression of great charm.

On his side, Prokesch was immediately attracted by the duke's blue eyes, fair hair and virile brow. His aristocratic good looks made a deep impression on him.

"I had a feeling," he wrote later, "similar to that of a young man meeting for the first time the girl to whom he will give his heart."

They sat down to table. Prokesch was placed beside Franz, opposite to the Emperor and the Empress. The Archduke John and other officers were also present. During the meal, the duke exchanged only a few polite remarks with his neighbor. But, after the Empress and the Archduke John had withdrawn, he questioned Prokesch about his travels. The major was only too glad to tell him about them.

He was a native of Graz, but he had traveled a good deal, and discharged various diplomatic duties in the Balkans, Asia Minor and Egypt. At Smyrna he had been

chief of staff of the Austrian squadron entrusted with suppressing the Barbary pirates in the islands of the archipelago. At the moment, he was resident at Athens, and was looking for a king for Greece.

The duke listened to him with intense interest. Prokesch had a voice which was mellow, deep and delightful. The most commonplace sentences, as he spoke them, seemed like evocations of fairyland. His conversation with the duke lasted two hours. When they parted, the duke shook hands with Prokesch and said, with a mysterious smile:

"I've known you for a long time...."

The next morning, when Dietrichstein visited the duke, he was accompanied by Prokesch, in full dress uniform. The duke darted towards him with outstretched hands and eyes aglow with delight.

"Oh, I'm so glad you thought of coming to see me! I told you last night that I had known you for a long time. I've liked you for a long time too. That's the truth...."

"Your Highness is too flattering to me," said Prokesch.

"Not at all. You don't know what a great service you did me.... You defended my father's honor at a time when everybody was doing his best to calumniate him. I've read your memoir on the battle of Waterloo. In order to get it into my mind better, I translated it twice, first into French and then into Italian."

"All I did was bear witness to the truth, Prince," said Prokesch. "To belittle Napoleon would have meant diminishing at the same time the merits of those who defeated him. At Waterloo your father was overwhelmed by circumstances rather than by men. His genius was not at fault. There was the rain, the fatigue of his troops, Grouchy's mistake...."

At this point, Dietrichstein intervened.

"Come, come, my dear Prokesch! Waterloo belongs to

the past.... Let's talk about the future. Tell the duke your plans about Greece...."

"They are easily told. I think that a unique opportunity presents itself for Austria to establish her domination in the East and check Russian influence there. Greece is in search of a king. There can be no question of a German prince on account of religion. Why should not Greece offer the throne to an Austrian prince?"

Prokesch paused to give weight to his words, and, pointing his finger at the duke, went on:

"To Your Highness, for example...."

"To me?" cried the duke, in astonishment. "Are you talking seriously?"

"So seriously that, after we parted last night, I spoke to my patron, the Archduke John, and to Colonel Werklein, your mother's Minister."

The duke's eyes sparkled.

"And what did they say?"

"They approved of my proposal."

"Did they, really?"

"Indeed, Her Majesty the Empress, who had meanwhile taken part in the conversation, approved of it too."

"The Empress!"

Franz was in ecstasies. He did not know how to thank this man, unknown to him the day before, who now offered him a crown as calmly as though it were a modest present to pay his footing.

At this moment Prince von Hohenlohe was announced. Prokesch stood up; but the duke signed to him to sit down again.

"Don't go," he said. "The prince won't stay long. I don't want to lose you now."

The old general came in, but he soon withdrew, impelled by the duke's monosyllabic replies. The others resumed

their conversation. Prokesch turned it to Napoleon. Franz spoke about his father with the greatest enthusiasm. Everything he said expressed ardent admiration and passionate affection.

"His military genius was unique in history," he declared. "Ah, what would I not give to become a great soldier like him!"

The three of them proceeded to discuss the battles Napoleon had fought, particularly Austerlitz. On this subject, the duke was inexhaustible.

He detailed the movements of the opposing armies as though he had been personally present. The whole lay of the terrain was familiar to him. He knew the names of all the corps commanders and the strength of all the units. He pointed out the mistakes which had been committed, the daring strokes which had succeeded. Usually calm, he became animated. His hands seem to be maneuvering the one hundred and sixty thousand men who took part in the battle. He brought it to life again before the eyes of Prokesch and Dietrichstein.

Prokesch stared at him in surprise. In this youth he found a man whom he had never suspected. The scope of the duke's knowledge of strategy and the sureness of his judgment astonished him.

"Prince," he said, "in all sincerity I don't believe there is an officer in the whole garrison of Graz better gifted for high command than yourself."

The duke smiled sadly.

"But what is the good of these gifts with which you are good enough to credit me, Herr von Prokesch? How can I turn them to account in the solitude in which I find myself? I am surrounded only by mediocre men, minor tacticians, stuffed shirts, dear old blockheads. What I need is officers with brains and enthusiasm."

He glanced furtively at his tutor, and went on:

"My destiny may be none other than to become a Prince Eugene of Austria. But how can I make myself ready for such a role? I am in search of a man capable of initiating me into the higher strategy of war. It is no offense to Count Dietrichstein to say that I have no such man in my entourage."

He paused and held out his hands to Prokesch.

"My friend, if I may call you so, my friend, you are the man for whom I have been waiting. Stay with me. Sacrifice your career for me. I feel that we were made to understand each other...."

Prokesch felt the warmth, the sincerity, of his outburst. It affected him deeply. He was at a loss what to say.

"Prince," he said, "you overestimate my merits. I should be afraid of disappointing you....I am no soldier, but simply a diplomat and a traveler."

"You are a great strategist. Don't deny it. Your writings prove it. Didn't I tell you that your *Life of Prince Schwarzenberg* served me as a model in my studies? We must read your account of the battle of Waterloo over again together....We can talk about what I have just suggested to you some other time. But I'm sure you won't refuse to help me."

Prokesch stood up.

"Permit me to withdraw, Prince. I must go and call upon your mother at the Villa Mandl."

The duke accompanied him to the door, with one hand on his shoulder.

Henceforth the two of them met almost every day. Dietrichstein felt that Prokesch would have a good influence over his pupil, and he encouraged their friendship.

Franz was as enraptured as a youth in love for the first time. Since Prokesch had come into his life, he felt as

though a great stretch of one of the walls of his prison had fallen down. Through the breach he could see the unconfined sky, the world with all its freedom, dreams which he had only to stretch out his hand to turn into realities.

He had found somebody who could understand him, somebody in whom he could confide, a man whom he could esteem and love. Prokesch, his senior by sixteen years, was not only a friend, but also a far-seeing guide, a kind of elder brother with an unselfish soul, whose advice and even reproach he could accept without injury to his proper pride. His heart drank deep of the cup of friendship.

It was not yet eight o'clock on June 28th when Prokesch presented himself at the duke's. He found Franz in riding kit, just going out. The duke promptly gave up his ride, and led his friend into his room. Dietrichstein was there, but he soon left them alone together.

"Has Your Highness reflected," asked Prokesch, "about what I said to you the other day on the subject of the throne of Greece?"

"I don't say 'No,'" replied the duke. "But am I not a year or so too young to become king of that country? I should have to have a Regent....Perhaps it would be better for me to wait."

"If you do," said Prokesch, "take advantage of the respite to make yourself ready for the great role to which you are destined. Above all, read the story of Napoleon's life. He foresaw the present state of affairs with implacable logic. You could have no better teaching."

The duke smiled. He got up, opened a bookcase, took out Las Cases's *Memorial* and Montholon's books, and put them on his desk.

"I am never without these books," he said, "and at Schönbrunn I have a whole library full of works about my father....But they contain only a record of the past.

What about the present? What do people think about me in France? Have I still partisans? I should have to be sure of a strong footing there. And what would be Europe's attitude towards me?"

Prokesch tried to curb his youthful anxiety, made all the worse by his impatience.

"In a few days," he said, "I have to set off on a long journey through Switzerland and Germany. I shall inform myself about the attitude of public opinion towards you, and let you know when I get back."

"Ah, my friend," cried the duke, "how can I thank you? ... Let us hope that your report will not be a disappointment. Perhaps people regard me as a nonentity. They may think that I have denied my birth. But you'll undeceive anybody who says anything like that to you, won't you? You'll tell people the truth, won't you?"

"I promise you that. Everywhere I go, people shall learn the true likeness of Napoleon's son...."

At this point the duke approached Prokesch, who was sitting down, and put his two hands on his shoulders.

"Prokesch, my friend Prokesch," he said, "my future is taking shape—you think so too, don't you?—and it is just at this moment that you talk about leaving me."

"But you are not alone, Prince. You are surrounded by people of proven devotion to you.... Besides, there is the Imperial family...."

The duke shook his fair head and cast his eyes up to heaven.

"How little you know them, Prokesch! They ooze boredom, melancholy and selfishness. I have never felt at home among them. Oh, those luncheons at the Imperial table! Oh, the conversation one has to carry on there! Conversation in working-class eating-houses must be more intelligent. My uncles, my aunts and my cousins are narrow-

minded and petty. Among them only the Archduke John deserves unreserved esteem. He is a big-hearted man. My grandfather is fond of me, to be sure, and he is fair and well-meaning. But he is dominated by Metternich, who does what he likes with him. The Empress has brains, but her heart is dried up. The Crown Prince is feeble-minded, and his brother Francis Charles is ill-natured, shifty and paltry."

"Then is there nobody you like?"

Franz blushed slightly.

"Yes, there is the Archduchess Sophie.... She is the only person who understands me. Her affection is my sole comfort.... She is so sweet, so kind, Prokesch. I was an abandoned child, and she warmed my heart to life again."

Prokesch sought to probe his friend's feelings.

"She is very dear to you, the Archduchess Sophie?"

"We were born to understand each other. She and you, Prokesch, are the only people in the world whom I have ever taken into my confidence. So, my friend, you can't desert me now. I need you. You must agree to become a member of my military household. I shall ask my mother to use her influence to secure your appointment."

"But I have no right to claim such an honor, Prince."

"It isn't a question of an honor. It's a question of your doing me a great service. Everybody is bent on keeping me in a subordinate position. You won't refuse to help me, Prokesch?"

"Of course not, Prince. My devotion is all yours...."

"I need a trusty councilor.... In Schiller's play, *Don Carlos,* the prince has a confidant, the Marquis de Posa, who guides him, assists him, and supports him in his troubles.... Prokesch, will you be my Posa?"

Prokesch drew back a step. His face went stern.

"You are a young man, not yet twenty. Have you made

up your mind, fully, firmly? Can I trust you? Prince, you have a great task before you; and I do not know you yet."

The duke turned pale. His eyes filled with tears.

"That is true. I have done nothing yet to deserve your esteem, your confidence in me.... Ah, if only you could look inside me! For whatever reason one may be exiled from one's native land, no reason is strong enough to make one forget it. No, I have not forgotten the place where I was born. Nor have I forgotten the spot where my father's body rots. Put me to the test! You will find that I am indeed Napoleon's son.... Have faith in my star!..."

He spoke with wounded pride. The doubt which Prokesch's words had cast upon him seemed to inflict a pain he did not deserve. His emotion swept away Prokesch's last scruples.

"Very well, Prince," he said, "I will be your Posa. But you must never be as weak as Don Carlos.... I agree to be your man; but on two conditions...."

Prokesch paused. The duke held his breath as he listened. Stressing his words, Prokesch wound up:

"On two conditions. One—that it is for life. The other—that yours shall be a great life."

The two of them stood face to face, with shining eyes. Prokesch opened his arms, and Franz flung himself into them, sobbing for joy. So their hearts gave themselves to one another.

On June 30th, Prokesch came to say good-by to the Duke of Reichstadt. They talked together for a long time. When they parted, they embraced, and Prokesch presented his friend with a medallion of Alexander the Great. Franz placed it over his heart as a talisman, side by side with a blessed medallion which Sophie had given him.

CHAPTER XLVI

SUMMONS FROM FRANCE?

THE open french-window of the drawing-room gave directly on to a terrace overlooking the park of Baden, planted with lime-trees and pines. The August sun sketched striking designs on the shaded paths, and the air smelt of warm resin.

Marie Louise was in conversation with Dietrichstein. She wore a gown of rose muslin. She was fatter than ever, and make-up and corset ill-concealed her body's premature degeneration.

"How do you find my son, Dietrichstein? You may speak frankly. We are alone."

"He still coughs a little, Madame, but he is better. I think that Malfatti, his new doctor, treats him more intelligently than poor Staudenheim, whom we lost in the month of May. He diagnoses an affliction of the skin and thinks that the duke's liver is out of order. He treats him accordingly: baths, a very strict diet, and no fatigue."

"And that meant postponing his entrance into the army for six months. You know, my friend, I feel that he'll never forgive us for that."

"Ah, Madame, it is hard to tell what he thinks...."

Marie Louise sighed. She went on:

"He has changed towards me very much. I can scarcely recognize him any more. He isn't at all like other young

men of his age. Since we've been here in Baden, I haven't heard him laugh once, and he has no taste for anything. I tried in vain to interest him in Doctor Rollett's collection of butterflies. Is there anything in the world prettier than butterflies? But he just looked at them with absent eyes.... What does he want? He has just been appointed major in Salins's regiment. He has a fine career before him...."

"He aspires higher, no doubt.... He dreams."

"Has he taken you into his confidence?"

"No. But I know that he is following the course of events in France very closely."

"What has he taken into his head now? As though there could be any better position than that of an Austrian prince!... I have it! Suppose he has some little love-affair in hand? He's just at the age when the heart awakens...."

Dietrichstein shook his head.

"No, it's not that, Madame. I keep an eye on him. I have him followed.... Every day he goes for a ride on horseback. He heads for Helenenthal. He rides like a madman, leaning forward over his horse's neck, with his hair streaming in the wind, always at a gallop. He plunges into the woods. At he end of a league or two, he dismounts and sits down at the foot of a tree. He stays there for hours at a time, without stirring. He doesn't read. He doesn't do anything. He just broods."

"What about?"

The tutor hesitated before he replied. Finally, in a low voice, he said:

"His father's memory haunts him. It's an ill for which there is no cure."

Marie Louise shivered. She threw a gauze scarf over her shoulders, as though an icy wind had fallen upon her

"That will do," she said, in a hollow voice. "I have no

desire to live over again with the son what I endured with the father."

Dietrichstein promptly passed on to another subject.

"The duke has many virtues; but he also has certain failings which, for his own good, I persist in trying to correct. To tell the truth, they are weaknesses and whims rather than anything else. For example, he cultivates popularity to excess. When he is out riding in the Prater, he loves impressing the Viennese with his horsemanship. He is proud when people cheer him. For another thing, I find him too familiar both with his inferiors and his equals. He shakes hands with everybody. He forgets his rank. I'm told it's an English fashion.... One of these days he'll get a flea in his ear...."

Marie Louise jumped.

"What did you say?"

"I beg your pardon," stammered Dietrichstein.

At this moment, the shouts and laughter of children rang out on the terrace. The door opened, and half a dozen boys and girls came into the drawing-room. They were all ages from five to fourteen.

"Isn't Cousin Franz back yet, Aunt?" asked one of them.

"Not yet, children...."

"But he promised us he'd be back for tea," said a little archduchess, in a peremptory tone.

"I don't expect he'll be long. Wait a little for him."

The children started amusing themselves all over the drawing-room. They surrounded the parrot and frightened it into loud squawks on its perch. They teased the little dog asleep on a cushion. The air rang with discords struck on the harp and the piano. Marie Louise put her hands to her ears.

"Will you keep quiet? Charles, Margharita will bite you

in a minute, and serve you right!... John, don't pull Lovely's tail!... Amelia, leave the harp alone!... You're just like a lot of little brigands."

All at once, a shout went up.

"Here he is! Here's Cousin Franz!"

All the children rushed to meet the duke. He came forward slowly, with a riding-crop in his hand, his head down, and his tall figure a bit bent. He wore white breeches and a dark coat, fitting closely at the waist. His high black cravat set off the pallor of his face. Mechanically he pushed back the fair curls tumbling about his brow.

The children surrounded him and escorted him into the drawing-room in triumph.

"Good afternoon, Mother," he said, bending over to kiss Marie Louise.

She looked up at him.

"Why, you're soaking wet, my dear boy! I suppose you've been galloping like a madman again. Aren't you ever going to learn sense? You ought to change your clothes. If you stay like that, you may catch cold and make yourself ill...."

"Not much chance of that in this heat, Mother...."

He sat down, and the younger archdukes lost no time in climbing up on his knees. He kissed them and caressed them, finding amusement in their laughter and their play. Like his father, he was fond of children, and liked to see them having a good time.

The two eldest archduchesses kept in the background, never taking their eyes off Franz. They were pale and emotional.

"Isn't he handsome?" said one of them. "Nobody else wears such elegant cravats."

"What I like best about him are his beautifully pointed

nails. They're just like a Chinaman's. And aren't his hands white?"

"I keep his portrait in my prayer-book," whispered the first. "I wish Mass lasted all day."

The other drew herself up proudly.

"I've got his portrait too. But I keep it under my pillow and go to sleep with it. That's much better."

The duke turned to Marie Louise.

"You won't forget about my friend Prokesch, Mother, will you? Can I count on you to recommend him to the Emperor again?"

"Certainly, my boy. I'll speak to him again this evening."

"We must get Metternich's consent, at all costs.... If I can't have Prokesch, I feel that I shall remain a nonentity all my life. I shall never succeed in anything. I..."

"Don't get so excited!" Dietrichstein intervened.

The duke pulled a snuff-box out of his pocket and took a pinch.

"Oh," exclaimed Marie Louise, "have you started taking snuff now? Why, it's a disgusting habit!..."

Franz looked his mother straight in the eyes.

"*He* took snuff, didn't he? So far as I remember, he had a whole collection of snuff-boxes. For that matter, he left them to me in his will.... Where are they?"

He paused, then went on, with bitter sarcasm:

"If I never got them, I suppose it was for the sake of sparing me a 'disgusting habit'...."

There was a silence. Marie Louise looked away in embarrassment, and cast about for another subject of conversation. All at once, she caught sight of Countess Scarampi, her lady-in-waiting, coming along the terrace towards the drawing-room.

"Ah, here's our dear Countess!" she said.

Madame Scarampi came in. She was red in the face, and seemed distressed.

"What's the matter, my friend?" Marie Louise asked her. "Why are you so upset?"

"Oh, if Your Majesty only knew!" exclaimed the countess, sinking into an armchair. "Such news! ... Really, it's made me feel quite ill.... Good Heavens, what a mess! ..."

"Come, come, Madame," said Dietrichstein, "tell us what it's all about!"

"I've just met Gentz, Prince Metternich's secretary. He's just had news from France.... A revolution has broken out there."

"What's that?" cried the Duke of Reichstadt.

"Charles X is in flight.... In Paris the populace are masters of the streets.... Nobody knows yet who will assume power: the Orléanists, the Republicans, or the ..."

She stopped, as though frightened.

"The Bonapartists!" cried Franz. "You needn't be afraid of the word, Madame. It won't burn your tongue."

He was on his feet, with his eyes shining. It was as though a sudden gust of wind had brushed back his hair. He started walking up and down the room, with his hands linked together beneath his coat-tails.

Everybody followed his movements with astonished eyes. Even the parrot on its perch turned its head from side to side and seemed to share in the general anxiety.

At length the duke came to a standstill in front of Marie Louise.

"Mother," he said, "we must return to Vienna at once."

"To Vienna?" groaned Marie Louise. "And what are we going to do there?"

"I shall await a summons from France...."

Marie Louise bowed her head. Already she felt herself being carried away. She recognized the voice of the master who, twenty years before, had told her to get ready, and whirled her along as a storm sucks a leaf into an eddy.

CHAPTER XLVII

NAPOLEONE

METTERNICH was at his castle of Königswart, in Bohemia, when he heard the news of the July Revolution in France. It sent him into a fainting fit, and his doctor had to be summoned.

"All my life's work is collapsing," he groaned, when he recovered consciousness.

He unburdened himself in invective against France, that "abscess in Europe"; against Charles X, that "old fool"; against Polignac, that "fatuous fop." Then he proceeded to consider the situation.

It was serious. In Paris the army and the populace were ready to acclaim Napoleon II. The stage, posters, pictures and popular songs made him the man of the hour.

"If young Napoleon presents himself at the frontier before the end of the month," people said, "he will sleep in the Tuileries as Emperor."

The mere idea gave Metternich a cold sweat. Had he spent fifteen years of effort, of guile, of plotting, only to reach this result?

Who would succeed Charles X? The Duc de Bordeaux? One of the Orléans family? Or Napoleon II? Ah no, rather than that Metternich would strangle young Napoleon with his own hands!

Anxiously the Chancellor followed the progress of

events in France. Oh, what a relief! For lack of a leader, from the outset the Bonapartists were divided. Some of them rallied to the Orléanists, others to the Republicans. La Fayette completed the spoiling of the Bonapartists' hand. On August 7th, 1830, the Duc d'Orléans was proclaimed King of the French under the title of Louis Philippe.

Metternich breathed a little more easily. The game was far from being lost. The Duc d'Orléans was only keeping the throne warm for the Bourbon claimant, Henri V. To frighten him, Austria need merely brandish the Duke of Reichstadt as a scarecrow in the distance. Metternich conveyed word to the "King of the barricades," as Louis Philippe was contemptuously called, that he had better abate his fever and forego his revolutionary propaganda. Otherwise the Eaglet would be turned into the Eagle and let loose on his dappled fleece. The warning bore fruit.

In Vienna Napoleon's son waited in vain for any word, any sign, any hint which would enable him to believe that France was thinking about him. Every day that passed bore away a little more of his hopes. He heard nothing. He was plunged in a darkness lit by no star.

At the end of August, Prokesch arrived at Schönbrunn, coming from Zurich. The two friends fell into one another's arms. Then the prince questioned the traveler eagerly.

"Tell me, what are people saying about me in Europe? Do they really believe that I am a kind of *minus habens*, as legend would have it?"

"You need have no fear of that," replied Prokesch. "Everywhere in Germany I found the deepest sympathy for you. Generally speaking, you are looked upon as the coming master of France...."

"Am I, really? But ah, Prokesch, if you only knew how

I sometimes tremble at the idea of ascending the throne!"

"You're not on it yet, Prince. But, sooner or later, Louis Philippe will fall. . . . Meanwhile, strengthen your will. Widen your knowledge."

Franz seized his friend's hand. Sadly, sorrowfully, he said:

"Ah, how your presence, your advice would have helped me in that task! But you are not to belong to my military household, as I hoped. Metternich refused my mother's request.

"'I need Prokesch for myself,' he declared."

The duke paused. He clenched his fists.

"But a time will come when my will shall prevail."

His excitement increased to such a point that it alarmed his entourage. It was decided to calm him down.

On September 4th, 1830, at the castle of Nikolsburg, he was brought face to face with Prince Dietrichstein, his tutor's brother, who had made a long stay in France during the past few years. Their conversation lasted two hours. It left the duke very much downcast.

Prince Dietrichstein had painted the situation in France in the blackest colors. According to him, the number of Bonapartists was decreasing from day to day. The people demanded only liberty, equality and peace; and these things the new régime promised them. "Napoleon II" had been popular under Louis XVIII and Charles X. Now, under Louis Philippe, he was nothing more than the Duke of Reichstadt, an Austrian prince.

Some days later, the duke set off with the whole Court for Hungary to attend the coronation of the Crown Prince at Pressburg. His stay in Hungary lasted several weeks, and he did not return to Schönbrunn until the beginning of October.

Meanwhile, following the example of the French, the

Belgians had revolted against Holland. On October 4th they proclaimed their independence. They were in search of a king. They contemplated offering the crown to the Duke of Reichstadt.

The duke's hopes rose again; but Metternich lost no time in dashing them to the ground.

"No," he decreed, "no, once and for all. He shall never sit on any throne."

On October 22nd, 1830, a mysterious personage, in a modest coach, arrived at the "White Swan Inn," at the corner of the Mehlmarkt in Vienna.

She was a lady, accompanied by only one maid. She declared that her name was Countess Camerata, and that she came from Trieste. She was about twenty-five, and very beautiful. Everybody admired her broad brow; her deep-set, glowing eyes; the clear-cut shape of her mouth; the mature perfection of her figure.

The traveler's strange behavior soon aroused the innkeeper's anxiety. He was relieved to learn that the police had their eye on her.

On the morrow of her arrival, the countess went and posted herself at the cross-roads at Spinnerin am Kreuz, where Marie Louise, who was on her way back to Parma, would pass. She succeeded in approaching Marie Louise and whispering a few words to her. Nobody heard what she said.

After this, she went out morning and evening. She was to be seen at the Burgtheater, in the Prater, on the ramparts: every place where the Duke of Reichstadt showed himself in public. Obviously she was watching for an opportunity to approach the prince and speak to him. But he was always accompanied by somebody: either

Foresti or Obenaus, or one of the officers of his regiment. From a distance, she devoured him with her eyes, and sighed in dismay at the expression of unhappiness stamped upon his face.

On November 14th, posted opposite the Hofburg, the countess waited patiently for the duke to come out. She was wearing a big Scotch plaid in which she could hide her face. Night was falling, and it was raining.

All at once, she gave a start. It was he; and, by an unexpected chance, he was alone. She followed him. Where was he going? Probably to Obenaus's house, which was close to the palace.

She ran to catch up with him; for his long legs were carrying him along quickly. She overtook him as he reached his tutor's door. She laid her hand authoritatively on his arm. The duke turned around.

"Who are you, Madame?"

She flung back her hood and disclosed her face. The lamp burning at the top of the steps lit it up clearly.

The duke was dumbfounded. In a flash, his father's face seemed to have appeared before him.

At this moment, the door opened. It was Obenaus. As he caught sight of the couple, his suspicions were aroused.

"What are you doing here, Madame?" he asked, sternly.

The countess drew herself up.

"Who shall forbid me to kiss the hand of my sovereign's son?" she asked.

Before Obenaus could interfere, she suited her action to her words. Then she vanished into the night.

Trembling all over, the duke walked up the steps and entered the house.

"Who is that creature?" demanded Obenaus.

"I imagine," replied the duke, thoughtfully, "that she must be my cousin, Countess Napoleone Camerata."

She was the daughter of Elisa Baciocchi, Napoleon's sister. As early as the age of five she was a promising child. One day Napoleon let her have lunch with him and put her sitting opposite him. Suddenly, with a frown, he said:

"What's this I hear about you, Mademoiselle? You wet your bed last night, didn't you?"

The little girl drew herself up as stiff as a post, and replied, with a fine air of offended dignity:

"If you can only talk about such silly things, Uncle, I'm going away...."

Since then her character had become stronger all the time. Married in 1825 to Count Philip Camerata, she had a son by him in the following year; but since then she had lived apart from him. She was regarded by her family as a bit eccentric, a dreamer of dreams of romance and epic. She spent half her days on horseback. To the great scandalization of her relations, she delighted in wearing men's kit and riding astride, mounted on the most stubborn stallions. She bred dogs, shot with gun and pistol, and fenced, handling her weapon like a professional duelist.

The great dream of her life was to see her cousin ascend his father's throne. All by herself, she set about making this dream come true. She proposed to play the role of the angel announcing that the time was at hand.

Some months earlier, at Baden, she had met the duke while they were both out driving. She leant out of the window and shouted at him:

"Aren't you ashamed to wear Austrian uniform?"

But the noise of the wheels had drowned out her indignant question.

On November 24th, when Prokesch paid a visit to Franz, he found him much excited.

"Read this letter!" said the duke, handing a sheet of paper to his friend.

With astonishment, Prokesch read the following letter:

Vienna, November 17th, 1830.

"PRINCE,

"I am writing to you for the third time. Be good enough to let me have a word to say whether you received my earlier letters.

"I write to ask you whether you mean to act as an Austrian archduke or as a French prince. In the former case, hand my letters over to the authorities. By undoing me you will doubtless improve your own position, and your act of devotion will redound to your credit.

"You can have no hope except in yourself.

"In the name of the terrible suffering to which the kings of Europe condemned your father, think of his death in exile by which they made him expiate the crime of having been only too generous to them. Remember that you are his son, and that his dying eyes rested on your portrait. Let all this horror sink into you. And then inflict upon the kings of Europe simply the punishment of seeing you seated on the throne of France. Take advantage of this moment.

"Prince, perhaps I have said too much. My fate is in your hands. I may tell you that, if you make use of my letters in order to undo me, I shall suffer more from the thought of your cowardice than from anything that may be done to me.

"The man who delivers this letter to you may be trusted with your answer. If you have any honor, you will not refuse me one.

"NAPOLEONE C. CAMERATA."

"What do you think of that, my friend?" asked the duke, when Prokesch had finished reading the letter.

"I think that this letter was written by an eccentric. By the way, who brought it to you?"

"Obenaus's servant...."

"It strikes me as a queer business, Prince. Have you any ideas about it?"

"I think," said the duke, "that the very first thing is to fathom my cousin's intentions. Who sent her? Has she come on behalf of Napoleon's family, on behalf of my partisans in France, or on her own account? To tell you the truth, she inspires me with no great confidence. My father was undone by her family, and I have no desire to be a second victim of the Bonapartes. Besides, the medium through which the letter reached me is suspicious, to say the least of it."

Prokesch studied the letter thoughtfully.

"Have you noticed," he asked, "that it is dated November 17th, but it did not reach you until the 24th? Isn't that odd? Where are the other two letters?"

"I never received them."

Prokesch had a shrewd look on his face. He snapped his fingers.

"What if all this is just a trick of Metternich's to put you to the test? Obenaus's servant may be in the pay of the police."

The duke turned pale. His doubts turned suddenly into certainty.

"I expect you're right," he said. "It would be very rash of me to commit myself in this matter. Tomorrow I shall show the letter to the Emperor; but I shall ask him for his word of honor that the countess shall not be molested in any way."

At the same time, it went hard with the duke rudely to repel an overture from a member of his own family. Even though she offered him no help in stabilizing his

future, even though she struck him as a bit crazy, the countess was at least well intentioned towards him.

On November 29th, he asked Prokesch:

"Will you give me your word of honor that I may count upon you in any circumstances?"

Prokesch did not hesitate.

"I give you my word.... I am engaged to be married, and I love my fiancée dearly; but I beg you to make whatever use of me you may wish...."

Friendship carried too such a point of self-sacrifice is rare.

"What I want you to do," said Franz, "is to go and see my cousin. Explain to her why I must adopt an attitude of reserve. I should not like her to misunderstand my reasons for being prudent."

Prokesch went to the "White Swan Inn" the very same day. The countess received him somewhat distrustfully; but he was soon able to reassure her.

He told her that Franz was far from forgetting his birth. He was wrapped up in his father's history. It nurtured all his plans, all his dreams.

By skillful questioning, Prokesch discovered that the countess had received no mandate from anybody to act as she had done. She had simply taken it into her head.

When Prokesch took leave of her, she shook hands with him most cordially. A week or two later she left Vienna, never to return.

It was a month later, one evening in December. Prokesch went into the duke's study and looked round for his friend. He caught sight of him asleep in an armchair, with a book open on his knees.

Prokesch went over to the prince and gazed at him for

some little time. The spectacle before him gave him a frightful clutch at the heart.

How pale the prince was! In his surrender to sleep, he looked thinner than ever, more frail than ever, as though death had suddenly drawn near to him. The dark rims round his eyes ate into his face. His breath came short and panting between his dry lips. His hands hung limp, the color of wax.

Franz opened his eyes and sat up.

"Oh, it's you, my friend? I'm so glad to see you. I felt so lonely this evening. I had no taste for anything. But, now that I see you, all my courage comes back to me."

His eyes shone too brightly as he spoke, and he had to interrupt himself while he coughed. When he got his breath again, he anticipated Prokesch's question.

"You needn't be alarmed. It's only a cold. I shall be all right again in a few days."

Prokesch took hold of his hands.

"Why, you're in a fever! Ah, Franz, why won't you take better care of yourself? You're always doing silly things. You ride your horses to death every day. Then you go to the opera without even changing your underclothes, in cold weather like this. Then you go to a ball and to supper. When you get home, instead of going to bed you drink one cup of coffee after another, and sit up till dawn. Is that reasonable?"

The duke hung his head, shame-faced.

"Don't scold me too much...."

"Dietrichstein and Doctor Malfatti, who are responsible for your health, aren't at all pleased with you; and who can say that they are wrong? You refuse to take care of yourself. You do still worse. You go against all the advice they give you.... Why will you persist in asking from your brain and your body more than they can stand?"

In a low voice the duke murmured:

"Prokesch, during the last few months I have seen all my dreams shattered one by one. First France escaped me, then Belgium, and now I am being robbed of the crown of Poland in its turn.... Yet I still have in my ears what my grandfather said to me at Pressburg last September:

"'If the French people want you, and if the Allies consent, I shall raise no objection to your ascending the throne of France.'

"Did he mean it? Or was he just lying to me out of kindness?... Ah, my friend, what forces I have arrayed against me! Who is to tell me whether anybody in France still thinks about me, whether I have any friends in the world who work for the triumph of my cause?"

While the prince became more and more excited, in the darkness amid which his friend struggled Prokesch caught a glimpse of the impenetrable face of Metternich, like a spider lurking in the middle of its web.

Alas, Austria had done only too well in building up a wall of silence around Napoleon's son!

During the past thirteen years, almost every year the Bonapartists had tried to hatch conspiracies. All over the country, in Bordeaux and Lyons in 1817, in Paris in 1820, in Belfort, Saumur and Metz in 1821, in Colmar in 1822, on the Bidassoa in 1823, they had endeavored to raise the army in rebellion in the hope of restoring Napoleon II to his father's throne.

But all these attempts had failed. Every time, after trials that aroused the utmost excitement, sentences of death had decimated the conspirators, though without daunting their courage.

Meanwhile no echo of these tragedies, not even the echo of the firing-squads, had reached the ears of the Duke of Reichstadt.

Then, quite recently, at the beginning of November, Napoleon's brother Joseph, who had settled at Point Breeze in the United States, had sent letters to Metternich and the Austrian Emperor through the medium of Fouché's son. He had asked that he should be entrusted with his nephew.

"If he appeared alone in France in a tricolor scarf," he wrote, "Napoleon II would be proclaimed Emperor."

But Joseph received no reply to his letters. At about the same time, Lucien Bonaparte made a similar overture. He was no luckier. Montholon failed in his turn.

The Duke of Reichstadt never had any knowledge of these endeavors.

The volume over which he had fallen asleep slid to the ground. The prince picked it up. It was Antommarchi's *Memoirs*. Of itself, the book opened at Napoleon's will. Franz closed his eyes. He recited the fourth clause as though it were a prayer.

> "I beg my son never to forget that he was born a French prince, and never to lend himself to being a tool on the hands of the triumvirs who oppress the peoples of Europe. He must never fight against France, or do anything to harm France. He must adopt my motto: 'Everything for the French people.'"

He paused for breath. Then he said to Prokesch, fervently:

"That is my breviary, my rule of life.... Yes, whatever happens, I shall always remain a French prince. I shall fulfill my destiny."

Prokesch looked at him reproachfully.

"Don't look at me like that!" cried the duke. "I know what you are thinking. You are contemplating the possibility of a war between France and Austria, aren't you? You needn't remind me that such a war would put me in

a heartrending position. I don't believe it will ever happen. I don't want to have to make such a choice.

"But, if it comes to the point, my choice is made already. I know beforehand that my Bonaparte blood would speak louder than my Habsburg blood.... The other day, at Schönbrunn, two Prussian officers wanted to see me. I refused to receive them. Two of Blücher's fellow-countrymen! Ah, no! I passed by them in the ante-room without saluting them.... Ah, Prokesch, you are so wise! Tell me how much longer must I wait?"

"Patience, Franz! Go on making yourself ready. It is still nearly two years before you come of age...."

"Where shall I be in two years?..."

The duke looked down at his uniform. He said, bitterly:

"I've been appointed lieutenant-colonel in Nassau's regiment. Doubtless my uniform will never see fire. But, in my will, I shall demand that my coffin shall be carried into the first battle, so that my bones may have the consolation of hearing around them the whistle of bullets for which I have so often longed."

Prokesch smiled at the extravagance of his language.

"Don't get beside yourself, Franz. Keep as calm as your father always was on the eve of battle.... Meanwhile we will work together. I shall teach you to be patient, to be strong."

Franz flung himself weeping into his friend's arms.

"You are the only man I can trust. What would become of me without you? Don't desert me! You are my one friend."

Prokesch consoled him. The duke reminded him of a bird trying his wings and, after several heavy falls, doubting whether it will ever fly.

CHAPTER XLVIII

THE TRAITOR

THE duke gave a final glance at himself in the mirror in his bedroom.

He looked very tall, very thin, in his close-fitting uniform of an Austrian lieutenant-colonel. He wore a white coat with steel-green braid and blue breeches striped with silver, and the Hungarian Order of Saint Stephen hung at his breast.

He shrugged his shoulders and sighed.

"Here I am in the uniform which showed a back view on all the battlefields of Europe!"

He looked up at his father's portrait. Napoleon seemed to look back at him sternly. Franz dropped his eyes, and left the room. He was on his way to a ball given at the English embassy by Lord Cowley.

This evening of January 25th, 1831, marked the Duke of Reichstadt's official entrance into society.

When he entered the brightly lit drawing-rooms of the embassy, accompanied by Prokesch and Count Dietrichstein, all eyes turned towards him. He walked forward languidly. His expression was at once imperious and appealing. There was a melancholy droop at the corners of his mouth. The halo of unhappiness which he wore with such grace served only to set him off.

Women nudged one another and whispered:

"There he is!... That's young Napoleon. Look at him! ... Isn't he like his father?..."

Everybody admired his air of reserve and distinction, the ease of his manner, the elegance of his attire. His blue eyes, his naturally curly fair hair, his rosy lips, the interesting pallor of his face, gave embodiment to the dreams of most of the fair ladies present.

The ball had already begun. Dietrichstein preceded the duke and introduced him. The duke shook hands and said a few words, or bowed to ladies and kissed their hands. He felt a bit bewildered in this atmosphere saturated with scent and light, amid the dreamy music of waltzes, flowers, brilliant uniforms and these ladies whose gowns generously displayed their dazzling flesh.

Dietrichstein kept on harrying him.

"You don't talk enough.... You're too absent-minded. ... You're not holding yourself properly."

The duke turned to Prokesch for some encouragement. He squeezed his hand discreetly and asked:

"Are you satisfied with me?"

"Quite satisfied. Go on as you have begun. Never forget that you are Napoleon's son, and that knowledge will keep you in the right path."

Leaning against a gilded pillar, with half-closed eyes, affecting an air of detachment, Prince von Metternich never took his eyes off the duke. His mother-in-law, Countess Molly Zichy, came up to him.

"He plays his part well, our bastard," she said, with a false smile.

The chancellor emitted a little whistle.

"Indeed, he does well enough."

At this moment, an elderly man in a russet wig came towards them, shuffling along. On his way, he offered pas-

tilles to ladies out of candy-boxes which he kept in the tails of his old-fashioned coat.

"Ah, here's Gentz, my right hand man," said Metternich, as he caught sight of him.

Gentz offered one of his boxes to the countess.

"A chocolate, Madame? They're filled with pistachio."

Metternich looked his secretary up and down.

"When are you going to buy a new wig, Gentz? And am I never going to see you in decent clothes again?"

"When Your Highness pays me enough," replied Gentz, insidiously. "I've got vices—and they cost me dearly."

"I simply stuff you with money; but there's no bottom to your pocket. It's that dancer of yours who is skinning you alive."

Turning to his mother-in-law, Metternich explained, sarcastically:

"This gentleman is at the moment the happiest man in the Empire—and the one who least deserves to be. This gentleman, at the age of sixty-five, has attracted the first dancer at our Opera."

"What? Fanny Elssler?"

"She herself, Madame," said Gentz, modestly. "She can still find some charm in me. I hasten to profit by the fact. So does she, for that matter; but our profits are not the same. She knows all the dances, including, alas, how to make florins dance. But I am amply rewarded. What a divine creature! What a perfect enchantress! When I am with her, I feel that I shall live to a hundred."

The old man's eyes were aflame. The countess smiled.

"My congratulations, Herr Gentz. But would it be indiscreet to ask you the secret of your success with the ladies?"

Gentz juggled one of his candy-boxes into the palm of his hand.

"My candies—but one must know how to offer them."

He bowed and moved away.

Prokesch touched the Duke of Reichstadt on the arm.

"There's Gentz, my friend," he whispered. "Say something nice to him. He has great influence with Metternich. He might be useful to you."

Franz went forward with outstretched hand.

"Good evening, Herr Gentz. I am glad to see that affairs of State allow you some respite."

The old man smiled a wry little smile.

"Don't be too indulgent with me, Your Highness. I am an incorrigible gambler and wencher. My private life is a scandal...."

"Don't calumniate yourself, Gentz," interrupted Prokesch. "You're not so bad as you try to make out.... Besides, the prince is grateful to you for supporting his cause."

Gentz put a flustered finger to his lips.

"Hush! There are things that one may think...."

He lowered his voice and added:

"To be sure, it was a great mistake to give France to the Bourbons. Napoleon should never have been dethroned. ...You would be reigning now...."

Then he shook his head.

"Your Highness, take the advice of an old man who has seen many things which he will never see again. Don't think too much of crowns. Life has much more precious things to offer: a good dinner, a pretty girl...."

He looked at the duke with envious eyes and murmured:

"Youth! Beauty!...Ah, Your Highness, if only I were like you!..."

He shuffled away and was lost in the crowd. At this moment, Franz felt as though something were burning into his back.

He turned round, and found himself face to face with Countess Nandine Karolyi, who was staring at him with her bold black eyes. A rose satin gown worked with silver clung to her perfect figure, and set off her brown hair and her aristocratic, haughty features.

The duke stood before her trembling like a bird fascinated by a snake. But he managed to bow and kiss the hand which she held out to him.

"Prince," she said, "I should scold you rather than thank you. The bouquet you sent me yesterday was wonderful. But roses, with frost on the ground!... Such an extravagance!"

Franz felt her voice flowing over him like liquid fire. There was a tightness at his throat.

"During the carnival," the countess went on, "I shall be giving a party. Can I count on you, Prince?"

"Of course, Madame," stammered the duke.

Nandine gave him the full benefit of her smile, and moved away. He stood there dazed, enraptured but stricken, as though he had suddenly lost a part of himself.

Count Dietrichstein rudely awakened him from his reverie.

"Come with me, Prince. It's time I introduced you to the Marshal."

The duke shuddered. He was about to meet Marmont, Duke of Ragusa.

It was Metternich who had more or less imposed this meeting upon him.

After the Revolution of 1830, Marmont, driven out by the French people, had sought refuge in Vienna, taking advantage of his friendship with Metternich. He was at once made welcome in the best society, and his glibness of tongue, which he put at the service of an inexhaustible memory, made him a great success in the drawing-rooms.

Marmont lost no time in expressing a desire to be introduced to his former master's son. Metternich lent himself to this desire with a good grace. He reckoned that Marmont, being embittered like all exiles, would paint an uninviting picture of France for the benefit of Napoleon's son.

When Dietrichstein first touched upon a meeting with Marmont, the duke had jibed. What, was he asked to meet the soldier who had handed the French army and its Emperor over to Schwarzenberg at Essonnes in 1814?

"Shake hands with the man who betrayed my father?" he cried. "Never! But for that wretch, I might today be on the throne of France...."

He hurried to his bookcase, took out his *Memorial*, and read aloud to his tutor the passage in which Napoleon, in Saint Helena, flayed the Duke of Ragusa.

> "I was betrayed by Marmont, whom I might almost call my son, my own offspring, my own handiwork. I entrusted my fate to him by sending him to Paris at the very moment when he was consummating his treachery and my downfall."

But Metternich and Prokesch had insisted on the meeting, and gradually they had worn down the duke's resistance.

Prokesch had represented to him the advantages he might derive from acquaintance with Marmont, who had been on intimate terms with Napoleon and knew France well. Perhaps, if he were tactfully questioned...

"Very well," Franz had finally agreed, "I will do violence to my feelings...."

Having made up his mind to play a part, he now did so skillfully. As soon as he was face to face with Marmont, he said to him:

"Marshal, you were one of my father's first comrades. I am delighted to meet you."

Marmont blushed violently, and replied:

"I was never fonder of anybody than I was of Napoleon. But I was driven to set my love of France still higher. It was force of circumstances which made me act as I did, much against the grain.... It hurt me terribly...."

His deep voice rang with an emotion which seemed sincere. Touched despite himself, the duke questioned the marshal about his relations with his father.

Marmont talked about the siege of Toulon and the campaign of Italy. He went into a wealth of detail, as though these events had taken place only the day before. Vivid stories flowed from his lips and brought the figures of the past to life again.

Little by little, the duke surrendered to his spell. He felt that Marmont still carried with him, in his eyes, on his brow, in his whole person, some reflection of Napoleon.

"Marshal," he said, "could you not call upon me and tell me more about my father?"

"Gladly. I was concerned in many events which would interest you. But I cannot call upon you without the permission of His Majesty and Prince Metternich."

"Of course. But I am sure beforehand that they will give you permission. We must talk about Vendémiaire 13th and the expedition to Egypt. We must follow Napoleon's campaigns on the map.... You were at Austerlitz and Wagram, weren't you?"

The duke had raised his voice in his excitement. Marmont turned quite pale.

"Speak lower, Your Highness!" he begged. "Speak lower! Remember we are in Vienna."

They had been left alone, and they talked face to face, with their arms on a table. But people in the next room

tip-toed to the door to look at them. There was whispering. The vehemence of their conversation was intriguing.

The next day, some people in Vienna said that the Duke of Reichstadt had reduced Marmont to tears by reproaching him with his behavior towards Napoleon. But other people asserted that the duke had challenged the traitor to a duel, and that the two of them were going to fight it out to the death.

CHAPTER XLIX

NANDINE

At the beginning of February, news reached Vienna which aroused wrath and consternation. Almost all over Italy the people had risen in rebellion. A gust of revolution swept the country, and the torch, passed from hand to hand, set fire to the little principalities of the peninsula one after the other. Thrones and crowns were tossed aside like scrap-iron.

France watched the progress of the revolutionary movement with obvious delight. She had fomented it secretly, and she was now ready to support it openly.

Metternich promptly reacted with his usual vigor. He gave France to understand that she had better keep quiet. If she did not, he had means at hand to bring Louis Philippe to reason. In other words, he made use of the Duke of Reichstadt like a professional duelist shaking his sword in its scabbard to cow a possible enemy.

On February 19th, Vienna learnt with dismay that Parma in its turn had risen in rebellion. Marie Louise, driven out by the insurgents, had taken to flight during the night of February 14th. She had sought refuge first at Cremona, and then at Piacenza.

At once the Duke of Reichstadt proposed to hasten to his mother's help. The Emperor was ready to give him permission; but he reckoned without Metternich. The

Chancellor's flesh crept at the very idea of the duke making his appearance in the plain of the Po.

"Do you want the Italian people to make him King, Sire?" demanded Metternich. "Do you want him to follow his father's example in Italy? Is that what you want?"

Francis let Metternich have his way. It was a terrible disappointment to Franz. He wept and entreated in vain.

"How unlucky I am!" he cried. "How I should have loved to draw my sword for the first time on behalf of my mother! Is it not my duty to defend her, to rescue her?"

He was overwhelmed. He wrote to Marie Louise:

"For the first time, I find it hard to obey an order from the Emperor."

He was restless and feverish. He could not keep still. Prokesch tried to calm him down in vain.

"The time is too short," the duke retorted. "It flies too fast to be wasted like this."

He was right. The opportunity presented to him did not last long. The Austrian troops had little difficulty in quelling the rebellion in Italy and restoring order.

To console his grandson, the Emperor flattered him with words of hope. On February 21st he said to him:

"When you appear on the bridge at Strassburg, Louis Philippe won't stay long in Paris.... Ah, Franz, why aren't you a year or two older?"

After his moment of intoxication, the duke relapsed into dejection. He had been all round his cell and found no way out of it. Now, with his eyes on the watch, and his ears alert for any reports from across the frontier, he contemplated flight.

It was the grace, the smile, of a woman which for some little time turned his thoughts into a less gloomy channel.

For comrades the duke had three gay fellows: Gustavus Neipperg; Count Maurice Esterhazy, a diplomat a little

older than himself; and the Infante Miguel of Spain, a great wine-bibber and a great wencher. The four young men attended all the social functions in connection with the carnival, which this year was an especially joyful occasion.

The duke never missed a ball, in the hope of meeting lovely Countess Nandine Karolyi, the toast of Viennese high society, to whom Maurice Esterhazy had introduced him. He danced with nobody else, had eyes for nobody else, and counted the smiles she bestowed on him with all the avarice of a miser counting his pieces of gold.

Prokesch had tried to put him on his guard against the dangers of his infatuation for Nandine.

"She is shallow. She is flighty. She will only make you suffer...."

One evening—it was February 15th—the Duke of Reichstadt and Count Esterhazy attended a masked, fancy-dress rout. Nandine was there too; but she left early, as she was giving a ball at her own house.

The duke and Esterhazy, still wearing their masks, escorted her there, and mingled with the guests, who were intrigued by the presence of these mysterious strangers. All night long Franz never left Nandine's side. He danced with her, supped with her, and drank Tokay out of her glass. He was intoxicated with music, perfume and love.

It was dawn before Franz took leave of Nandine. Chance would have it that they were alone together for a moment in the antechamber. The room was dark.

All at once, Franz felt his head taken between two hands. Long, strong fingers groped in his curls, still damp from the exercise of dancing. He surrendered himself. Then burning lips clung to his own. His knees went weak. He reeled. He felt as though his life were being drained out through his lips endlessly.

"Nandine!" he murmured.

She tore herself away from him and fled.

It was broad daylight when he found himself outside. He made his way to the Hofburg somewhat anxiously. What would they say to him? He was surprised and relieved to find that his absence had passed unnoticed.

He hastened to relate his escapade to Prokesch, though without saying anything about its conclusion.

"What a valuable pointer, my friend!" he said. "If some day I decide to run away from here, I know now that nobody will know I am gone until the next morning. By that time it will be too late to overtake me."

Pokesch consistently discouraged Franz in his idea of running away. He promptly changed the conversation. He reproached his friend over his infatuation for Nandine. But Franz defended himself.

"Haven't I a right to love and be loved? Wasn't my father familar with passion? Even my grandfather makes no objection to my having love-affairs. He has simply warned me against the dangers of adultery."

"But the Countess Nandine is no woman for you, Franz. You are too young to come into contact with a creature like her without risk.... Besides, you have your life before you. For the time being, you should think only about educating yourself, developing your mind, extending your knowledge."

Prokesch looked the duke straight in the face.

"Franz, you belong too much to history to waste your time on romance."

The duke promised to see less of Nandine. But he did nothing of the kind. He kept on visiting her and writing to her.

In the month of April, however, Esterhazy was sent to Naples as secretary to the Austrian legation. Thus robbed

of the comrade who had arranged his meetings with Nandine, Franz stopped seeing his mistress.

But he maintained a clandestine correspondence with her, thanks to the good offices of Esterhazy, with whom he exchanged letters unknown to his entourage.

"Why falter where your happiness is concerned?" the young diplomat wrote to him. "Do not hesitate! She loves you. . . ."

Alas, the duke was too closely watched. He could only meet Nandine at their mutual friends'. After the end of April, he confessed to Esterhazy, he was unable to cross the threshold of the house "where he had found such happiness."

Meanwhile, despite all the precautions which the conspirators had taken, such as disguised handwriting and fictitious addresses, Dietrichstein ended by smelling a rat. One evening in June, the duke surprised his tutor ransacking his desk.

"What are you looking for, sir?" he inquired, at once anxious and indignant that his tutor should dare to tamper with his personal papers.

Dietrichstein had been brought to a standstill by a locked drawer.

"What's in here?" he demanded.

"Letters. Keepsakes. Things that don't concern anybody but myself."

"Open this drawer!"

"I shall do nothing of the kind, sir," retorted the duke, curtly.

"If you won't open it, I shall either summon a locksmith or have the desk broken open."

They argued acrimoniously. Finally the duke gave way and opened the drawer. Dietrichstein seized upon a packet

of letters. It was the correspondence which Franz had exchanged with Maurice Esterhazy.

Dietrichstein ran through the letters. At once a turn of phrase caught his attention.

"I haven't seen the Chinaman.... I have no news from China."

Dietrichstein frowned.

"Who is this Chinaman?" he demanded. "A girl, I suppose?"

The duke went white. He set his jaws. Dietrichstein drew his own conclusions. He lost his temper.

"So you have been writing love-letters?"

"So it would seem," replied Franz, icily. "And can you guess to whom I have been writing them?"

"Have you written to her directly?"

"No."

"Then who has acted as your intermediary? Do I know him?"

Franz kept his mouth shut. Furious at his failure to get the better of his pupil's obstinate silence, Dietrichstein burst out into abuse and threats. He kicked up such a row that the room was soon full of people attracted by the noise.

"For the love of God," said Franz, at length, "calm yourself! Can't you see that we are no longer alone? Do you want these people to hear all about it?.... I give you my promise that I will hand over the letters to you."

Dietrichstein calmed down. An hour later, Franz handed him his love-letters. His tutor flung them into the grate, and set fire to them. They burst into flames.

With tears in his eyes, the Duke of Reichstadt watched the leaves twisting in their futile fight against the fire. Of his first love-affair, soon nothing was left but a little heap of ashes. A thin drift of smoke rose from them, like a soul that lost no time in its passing.

CHAPTER L

THE DREAM

THE MADURA TA

AT the wide-open window of his room, the Duke of Reichstadt watched the spring, like some unseen general, completing its conquest of the park at Schönbrunn.

It had taken weeks to win possession of the hedgerows, the groves, the ponds. One by one, it had made the aspens and the birches its prisoners. Yesterday the lime-trees had accepted its rule, and during the night, as a sign of triumph, it had planted its green flag on the last cluster of elms.

With his heart wrung by the spectacle which presented itself to him, the duke yawned and stretched himself. His desk was not in its usual disorder. The papers on it were neatly arranged. On it also lay the last works which he had studied with Prokesch: Montecucolli's *Aphorisms* and Prince Eugene of Savoy's *Memoirs*.

"How I miss him!" he sighed.

He was bored to death since Prokesch had had to leave him. Throughout the winter, Prokesch had come to the Hofburg to see him almost every day. They worked together until far into the night, and their friendship steadily strengthened.

But Metternich soon took umbrage at it. He was in constant dread lest Prokesch should influence the duke to

make some startling move which might be bad for his policy. So he set himself to separate the two friends.

To begin with, he refused Prokesch permission to pay a visit to Paris. The object of his visit could only be to inform Napoleon's son about the strength of the Bonapartist party.

Franz kept on begging Prokesch not to desert him.

"Stay with me, and stake everything on my cause!" he said, clasping his friend to his heart.

Faithful to his promise not to go away from the duke, Prokesch asked leave to resume his military duties. But Metternich turned a deaf ear.

"Prokesch is an eccentric, and he thinks too much of himself," he said to Gentz, when his secretary pleaded the cause of the two friends.

Finally, making up his mind to finish with the friendship between the duke and Prokesch, Metternich did worse. At the end of March 1831, he sent Prokesch to Bologna as Austrian Minister to the Papal legate, Cardinal Oppizoni. This appointment meant that the two friends would be separated for some months.

Reichstadt was cut to the heart. He and Prokesch said good-by on March 31st, after exchanging presents. Prokesch gave the duke an Albanian musket. The duke, on his part, sent Prokesch a watch, with a letter in which he wrote:

> "This is the first watch I ever wore, and it has never left me for the past six years. May it soon tell you that the hour of glory has struck!"

More than a month had elapsed since Prokesch had gone, and Franz had no news from him. At a loose end, he surrendered himself to melancholy.

Only one person remained who brought a little warmth

into his life: Sophie. Every day, like a schoolboy watching the clock for playtime, he waited impatiently for the time when he could go and see her.

Ten o'clock struck. Reichstadt turned away from the window. He glanced at himself in a mirror to make sure of the sit of his cravat and the tidiness of his glossy hair, and made his way to Sophie's apartments, which were situated below his own. A back staircase enabled him to visit her without the knowledge of her ushers and her ladies.

When he entered the drawing-room, Sophie was picking out an Italian arietta on the piano. He went over to her, and threw his arms round her, in fun. Sophie struggled.

"Let me at least get to the bottom of the page!" she exclaimed.

"No, I won't!" he replied, hugging her more tightly.

"What a barbarian you are! The only music you like is drums and trumpets, and you go to sleep at concerts."

"One can't conquer the world with Mozart's sonatas," retorted Reichstadt.

Sophie stood up. He could see her in the full daylight, so graceful, so pretty in her soft-colored gown with its flowing sleeves that she looked like the fairy queen of the spring which was dancing on the lawns in the park.

He smiled at her.

"As soon as I see you, I feel better. When I come in here, I seem to leave all my troubles, all my anxieties, all my doubts at the door.... I ought to stay with you always."

Sophie studied him closely. He was dressed with supreme elegance. She made a face at him.

"What a dandy you are!"

"Dressing myself is my chief occupation," retorted Reichstadt, with sullen resentment. "Napoleon's son is reduced to ruling over cravats, canes and handkerchiefs."

Sophie took hold of his chin and tried to look into his eyes.

"Let me see those eyes of yours.... You're not being good.... You've got your head full of mad ideas again."

"It wouldn't be so full of them if I wasn't so lonely.... You know, Sophie, I was brought up with no affection, with no playmates, without anybody who cared for me around me. My father's memory kept everybody away from me as though I were a leper.... Then at last I had a friend: Prokesch. They took him away from me...."

"He'll come back.... Have patience!"

But the duke would not listen to her.

"Not even a friend! Am I never to have anybody all to myself? Even you, Sophie—you are somebody else's wife. Whatever affection you give me, you have to steal from him.... It's always been the same. I was robbed of my crown, my empire. I was deprived of my name, my native land, my father. And what have I been given in exchange? Estates which I shall never possess, and a prince's title—just good enough for a bastard...."

"Don't be unfair, Franz," murmured Sophie.

"Oh yes, I know! My mother's family have surrounded me with every luxury, every attention. In the eyes of the world they may seem beyond reproach. What an ingrate I should seem if I turned against them!... But, however fine it is, a cage remains a cage. To be always watched, always spied upon—what kind of life is that? Just imagine that, while I am asleep, one footman goes through my pockets, while another ransacks my waste-paper basket! I can keep nothing to myself but my thoughts, and everybody keeps guessing even at them. I hunger and thirst for scope, for freedom. I'm stifled here.... I'm thinking of running away."

Sophie jumped. She stared at him with startled eyes.

"Do you really mean that?"

Franz turned a drawn face towards her.

"Do I look as though I were joking?... I can't go on living in these conditions. I must make my escape...."

"It's a mad idea.... And what about Metternich?"

"I can't stand his persecution any longer, especially now that his wife eggs him on against me.... I shall manage to put myself out of his reach, and then we can settle accounts later on. If Prokesch hadn't dissuaded me, I should have gone before now; but he thinks that it would be better for me to await a favorable opportunity. Wait, always wait! Am I to kill myself with waiting?"

"Why don't you confide in the Emperor?" said Sophie. "You've always been his favorite grandson."

"My grandfather?" sneered the duke. "When I'm with him, he promises me everything I want. He even puts into my head ideas which I've never had. If it depended only on him, so he says, I should have been on the throne of France long ago.... And then Metternich comes along, and the Emperor ceases to count. He simply collapses. He decides the exact opposite of everything he undertook to do...."

Sophie clasped her hands.

"Oh, I wouldn't blame you, Franz. You know my feelings, don't you? But I tremble at the thought of your running such a risk.... Think it over...."

"I tell you I can't go on. People find fault with the least thing I do. The other day, for example, Dietrichstein made a scene because I was smoking in a window-recess. And he has again forbidden me to ride."

Sophie seized him by the shoulders and shook him briskly.

"And there I agree with him! It seems you boasted that you had ridden three leagues in forty minutes. That's sheer

craziness. Baron Moll, who was with you, rode his horse to death."

"Well, he was paid for it."

"That doesn't excuse you for being so silly, so rash. What's the sense of doing things like that, my dear?"

"They help to harden me, to make me ready."

Sophie remained pensive for a moment or two.

"Franz, you seem to me to have changed a good deal since you got to know Marshal Marmont."

"Oh, don't imagine, Sophie," replied the duke, quickly, "that I have developed a sudden affection for the man who betrayed my father.... I fathomed his intentions at once. He has never inspired me either with confidence or with liking. He's an ambitious man. He hopes to climb with my help. But, if I ever ascended the throne, I should drop him. For that matter, he's not the kind of man with whom one should link one's fate. He's never succeeded in anything. He brings bad luck...."

Sophie nodded.

"Still, Metternich hoped that he would exercise a good influence over you."

"If so, he will be disappointed. All that Marmont has done is help me to know France and the French better. I knew he was meant to spy on me; but I got round him and managed to question him. As he spoke, the events of the past fell into shape. I was able to put people in their proper places among them. I realized how deep was the gulf that had been dug between the King of Rome and the Duke of Reichstadt."

All at once, he swung from depression to exaltation. He became excited. He was no longer the same man.

"Sophie, my sweet Sophie, my hour will come. I am sure of it now.... One day I shall make my appearance on the Rhine, and all France will rise up to welcome me. The

army will clear the way for me as I advance, and the people will escort me. Louis Philippe may send his mercenaries against me; but they will flee before the brilliance of my star. My eagle, in its turn, will fly from belfry to belfry until it reaches the towers of Notre-Dame."

Infected by his enthusiasm, Sophie clapped her hands.

"Yes, my dear Franz, I can see you.... It will be a great day for me too."

"I shall arrive in Paris. I shall be in the uniform of the light infantry of the Guard.... The Guard will be there. They will recognize me. They will say: 'It is indeed his son.' Bertrand will be there, and Montholon, and Marchand: all those who loved him; all those who never betrayed him. The Guard will present arms, a band will play the *Marseillaise*, and all the old veterans, with their iron-gray mustaches, will laugh and weep at one and the same time. I shall put myself in their midst. Then I shall cry to the Czar, to Francis, to the King of Prussia, to all Europe: 'Now come and catch me!'"

Sophie gazed at him, conquered in her turn. His Bonaparte blood had indeed submerged his Habsburg blood, just as a great river carries away and cleanses and absorbs a stream of muddy water. He looked sublime. His dream shone in his eyes and lit up his brow. He reminded Sophie of one of those carved figure-heads of old ships, straining tensely towards the port of victory.

She sprang to her feet and took him in her arms.

"You will be Emperor, Franz, you will be Emperor!... I shall have lost you. But you will be happy; and I shall grow old with the thought that it was I who helped a little to give you to France."

CHAPTER LI

JEALOUSY

In the month of June 1831, Dietrichstein's task came to an end. He handed over to his successors. On the 14th, the anniversary of Napoleon's victories at Marengo and Friedland, the Duke of Reichstadt's military household assumed their duties.

They consisted of three officers: General Hartmann, Captain Standeiski, and Baron von Moll. They were creatures of Metternich and Kutschera, the Emperor's aide-de-camp. Their choice was at once a program and a policy.

The general was an old blockhead, a dunce and a dullard, immersed in red tape. Standeiski was a spy in the Chancellor's pay. Only Baron von Moll, who was kindly and cheerful, but shallow, made a favorable impression on Franz, who lost no time in making friends with him.

Count Dietrichstein was in despair to see his pupil surrounded by such incapable people, so ill-equipped to understand and guide him.

Hartmann received very definite instructions. They were drawn up by Metternich and approved by the Emperor. They were insistent, above all, upon the necessity of maintaining a close watch on the prince and never letting any strangers approach him.

After plaguing his grandfather with his repeated entreaties, the duke finally obtained his permission to under-

take military duty. In his capacity as lieutenant-colonel, he was entrusted with the command of a battalion of the Hungarian infantry garrisoned in Vienna.

He flung himself feverishly into his new profession. He was at his headquarters at five o'clock in the morning, and spent the whole day in barracks or on the parade-ground.

His battalion carried out exercises on a plateau opposite Schönbrunn. Sightseers flocked to see Napoleon's son riding at the head of his troops, very erect on his white Arab horse, and brandishing the saber which his father had carried at the battle of the Pyramids. He treated his men kindly, and they cheered him, filled with enthusiasm by his martial appearance. He redoubled his zeal and sought the most exacting duties.

But he ate hardly anything. At night, he plunged into his books, and allowed himself only three or four hours' sleep.

This way of life made him thin. His voice, unaccustomed to command, got hoarse, and he developed a cough. His complexion turned the color of earth, and his white uniform hung loose on him.

His colonel, Prince Wasa, reported on him as follows:

"Commands and handles his battalion impeccably. Is a horseman of the first order. Has excellent health, and can withstand any fatigue."

When he was asked how he was, the duke replied, with assurance:

"I am perfectly well."

Hartmann noticed nothing, or, if he did, had not the courage to interfere. Not for anything in the world would the duke have admitted that he felt ill or tired. But fortunately Doctor Malfatti had his eye on him.

One day the doctor went to the barracks and surprised

the duke lying on a couch, exhausted and almost fainting. Reichstadt was unable to deny that he was ill.

"I resent the fact that this wretched body of mine won't obey my will," he said.

"It is a pity," replied Malfatti, "that Your Highness cannot change your body as you change your horse when you have worn one out."

In the month of August, the duke caught a bad cold and was feverish. His doctor could not get him to stay in bed longer than one day; but he thought it his duty to inform the Emperor. As it happened, cholera had just made its appearance in Vienna, and this made precaution doubly necessary. On the strength of Malfatti's report to the Emperor, the duke, who had been taking part in a review, received orders to return to Schönbrunn at once. He had to obey. As he passed the doctor, who was present at the review, he said, angrily:

"I suppose it's you who have had me put under arrest."

His enforced rest at Schönbrunn did him good. His appetite returned, and he slept better. His complexion, which had been livid, turned rosy again, and his breathing was easier.

He proceeded to make his peace with Malfatti, who was kept at home by an attack of gout, and often went to see him at his country house at Hietzing.

They had long talks together. Malfatti, as he lay with his foot propped up and bandaged, studied his visitor with his dark, shrewd eyes. He was astonished at the scope and depth of the duke's knowledge. He admired his gift for probing people's hearts, and the shrewdness with which he put leading questions when he wanted to find out something.

Their usual subject of conversation was literature. The duke was fond of Ossian's songs. He preferred Schiller to

Goethe and Corneille to Racine. At the same time, he had a predilection for *Andromache*. He recalled that his father had feared for him the fate of Astyanax, who was carried into captivity by Pyrrhus after the death of his father, Hector.

Every day Franz went for a walk with Sophie in the gardens which were reserved for the Imperial family in the Schönbrunn park, or else the two of them went for a ride, across the big park and out into the country. They plunged into woods, scaled sunny hills, and then sought the coolness of the meadows. During part of the time, they rode side by side. These hours, which were sweet to them, passed with the speed of a dream.

One morning Reichstadt and Sophie were walking slowly along the paths in the gardens. September was coming to an end. The sky was intensely blue, and no harsh breath of wind stirred the air. A lovely light set off the distant skyline in all its purity. Summer was softly dying in peace and silence.

The duke held by the hand Sophie's little boy, who was just beginning to walk. Sophie stepped lightly in her bright muslin gown, with a vividly colored Indian shawl thrown over her shoulders.

"Have you any news from your friend Prokesch?" she asked.

"None. In his last letter, which he sent me secretly, he said nothing about coming back. I am all impatience for his appointment to come to an end and for him to return. The prospect of spending the winter without him, in *tête-à-tête* with Hartmann, Standeiski and Moll, fills me with dismay."

"Indeed, Franz, you have poor companions in Hartmann and Standeiski."

"They are men of limited intelligence, just like trained dogs. Dietrichstein was harsh and fidgety; but he was fond of me in his own way, and he thought about my future. These fellows are simply sergeant-majors, with red tape where their hearts ought to be. Prokesch was right when he said that with them I should be like an Arab thoroughbred coupled with two Bohemian cart-horses and an Italian cab-horse...."

At this moment, little Francis Joseph started crying and refused to walk any farther.

"He's tired," said Sophie.

Reichstadt picked the boy up and tossed him up and down. The child was comforted and started laughing. The duke amused him with his watch, chain and seals. With outstretched hands, the boy tried to take possession of them.

"Oho, so you're fond of everything that glitters already," cried the duke. "You were born to be an Emperor."

He turned towards Sophie. Her serious air surprised him.

"What are you thinking about?"

Sophie gazed at him steadily, with a love-light in her deep eyes.

"I should like to have a child like you," she said.

Franz kissed her on the brow. He guessed the dream that had come into her mind as she watched him petting the boy: the two of them together for ever, and with them a child born of their flesh....

They reached the little pavilion at the spring which gave its name to the palace of Schönbrunn. A white marble nymph held an urn from which she poured water. Franz pointed to her.

"What a lovely body!" he said. "What a graceful attitude!"

Sophie's face hardened.

"You say that because she's like that dancer of yours...."

"That dancer of mine?"

"Yes, that Fanny Elssler...."

"What do you mean?"

"She's very beautiful, isn't she?"

"Are you jealous?"

With restrained violence, Sophie retorted:

"Have I any right to be? You're a free agent. You can do what you like....They say she's your mistress....I hate to see you involved with a woman like that, that's all...."

Franz stared at her in astonishment.

"What extraordinary ideas you get into your head, Sophie! Why, it's false, absolutely false! I don't know Fanny Elssler. I've never even spoken to her. It's true that I often go to the Opera to see her dance. She's beautiful, and I admire her as an artiste. But she's absolutely nothing to me. I swear it. In any case, why should you talk to me about her here and now, when I haven't set foot in a theater for the past two months?"

Sophie flushed slightly, in embarrassment.

"Yesterday one of our cousins—I'm not going to tell you his name, so you needn't ask me—told me that he had seen your valet taking love-letters to Fanny Elssler."

Franz flung up his arms to heaven.

"Oh, that explains everything. Six months ago, when Prokesch was still in Vienna, he used to go and work with Gentz at Fraülein Elssler's house every evening. So, when I had anything urgent to say to him, I used to send my valet to the dancer's with a letter for him. Of course, the valet took care not to be seen by Metternich's spies."

"Is that really the truth?"

"Do I look as though I were lying?...For that matter,

Fanny Elssler doesn't want me. Gentz is her lover, and he's as jealous as a pasha. He pours out money on her."

By way of finally convincing Sophie, he added:

"Do you really believe that I could keep a dancer like Fanny Elssler with the hundred florins a month I get for pocket-money?"

Sophie shook her head, with its heavy coils.

"Do you need money to make people love you, Franz? What about that Polish canoness?..."

"She's pretty, to be sure; but she's a nuisance. I can't walk a step in the park without meeting her. I think she's a bit crazy."

"Yes, crazy with love for you. She writes you letters...."

"But I don't get them....Standeiski does his spy's job well, I must admit."

"The other day, the Emperor got one from her. He showed it to my sister, and she told me about it....The canoness compared you to an eagle brought up in a hen-run."

"A flattering comparison, wasn't it?"

Sophie stamped her foot.

"One has only to look at the women when you appear. They're all the same. Their eyes sparkle like stars...."

Franz sighed. With bitter sarcasm, he said:

"Handsome and unhappy! What woman can resist that?..."

There was a seat near them. They sat down on it. The child started playing in the gravel at their feet. The waters of the spring sang to them. The sun seemed to bring their two heads together.

CHAPTER LII

DEPRESSION

At the end of the month of September, the Duke of Reichstadt had a delightful surprise. One evening, he was told that a visitor insisted on seeing him. It was Prokesch. The two friends flung themselves into each other's arms.

"Is it really you?" cried the duke. "I didn't dare to expect you so soon."

Eagerly he questioned Prokesch. What was the situation in Italy and France? Was it true that Louis Philippe would soon lose his throne? What did people think about Napoleon II? Had he any chance of being summoned by his partisans?

Prokesch exerted himself to moderate the duke's enthusiasm. Since he could give it little encouragement, it might prove dangerous to his friend's excitable temperament.

It was not true, Prokesch told the duke, that he had only to appear in Italy to make the people rise in his favor. As for France, Prokesch could see no possibility of Louis Philippe being overthrown for two or three years. Meanwhile the duke must keep calm and make himself ready.

At the same time, Prokesch had picked up some favorable indications. The French people were either Republican or Bonapartist. A few months earlier, ten thousand workmen had marched in procession through the streets of

Paris, shouting: "Long live Napoleon II." In the country people prayed for him. In the towns his name was never mentioned without emotion.

Franz listened, hanging on his friend's words. He felt as though he could hear all those unknown hearts that beat for him, all those thousands of friendly voices that summoned him....

Alas, the enthusiasm which Prokesch's return aroused in him did not last. Through the news which they communicated to him, his entourage exerted themselves to convince him that, in accordance with Metternich's will, he had no hope of any throne in Europe.

The insurrection in Poland was crushed. The Italian patriots were defeated. Belgium had chosen her king, in the person of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. As for Louis Philippe, his position was becoming stronger every day.

The "King of the barricades" was adroitly conciliating the Bonapartists. He had restored Napoleon's statue to the Place Vendôme. His government encouraged those who celebrated the Napoleonic epic in literature and art. Now that he was entering into legend, Napoleon was becoming inoffensive.

There remained Napoleon II. But the press and the theater took it upon themselves to depreciate him in the eyes of the people. He was represented as an effeminate figure of fun, a German princeling with no initiative and no sense of dignity, from whom France need expect nothing.

The duke read all these compliments in the Paris papers which were given to him. He was unaware of the fact that, at the same period, Montholon and Jerome and Joseph Bonaparte were renewing, without success, their efforts to soften Metternich and get him to open the Eaglet's cage.

One evening Prokesch, who visited Franz every day, found him particularly depressed.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"At last I know the truth about what people in France think of me.... This morning I found this pamphlet on my desk. It is by Monsieur Thiers, and deals with the July Monarchy.... Read this passage, Prokesch...."

Prokesch read the following:

> "Napoleon II had nothing on his side but a few memories scattered here and there in our towns and our countryside.... His father's immense fame is a purely intellectual force. One cannot govern a country with such scanty material. As a form of government, nothing could be more undesirable...."

"What do you think of that?" asked the duke.

Prokesch felt that he was so depressed, so dejected, that it was essential to arouse his enthusiasm again.

"Franz," he said, "I scarcely know you. What has become of that fine flame which used to be alive in you? Why should you be so overwhelmed by a few lines written by a party leader? Is this the way in which to impose your will on Fate?... In my turn, I have brought you a pamphlet which has just been published. It is by Monsieur de Chateaubriand...."

"Chateaubriand?" the duke objected. "Isn't he as bitter an opponent of my father as ever?"

"That may be; but still he has a sense of justice and a sense of honor, my dear Franz. You are so little forgotten in France—and incidentally so little feared by Louis Philippe—that the question of revoking the banishment of the Bourbons and the Bonapartes, with yourself at the head of them, has just been raised in the House of Representatives.... But listen to what Chateaubriand says.

> "'What ancestry conferred on the Duc de Bordeaux, the Duke of Reichstadt derived from his father's fame. Napoleon moved faster than the slow process of long lineage....'

"And here is something else Chateaubriand says about you.

> "'His mother gave him the past, his father gave him the future. All France was still full of a generation who, if they had recognized Napoleon II, would have done no more than return to the loyalty which they had sworn to Napoleon I. The army would have welcomed with pride the son of the man of victory.'"

As Franz listened, all at once he seemed to see the situation more clearly. He breathed more easily. The faith which quickened the course of his blood and nurtured his daring dreams revived in his heart.

"Ah, my friend," he cried, "you have done me a lot of good."

"Read this little book from beginning to end, Franz. You will find in it advice which applies as well to yourself as to the Duc de Bordeaux."

Prokesch went on talking. Then he noticed that Franz was no longer listening to him. He was turning the pages of the pamphlet automatically, with an absent-minded air and a far-away look in his eyes. Prokesch gazed at him anxiously. Only too often the duke swung from excitement to depression with alarming facility.

"What are you thinking about, Franz?" he asked.

The duke jumped.

"I was thinking about what Chateaubriand says about Marie Louise: 'His mother gave him the past.' Alas, that was all she gave me. I can't help comparing Chateaubriand's words with what Napoleon said to Las Cases one Sunday in May 1816:

"'A son by Josephine was essential to me, and he would have made me happy.... I should still be on the throne; for the French would have become as attached to him as they were to the King of Rome, and I should never have set foot upon the pit concealed by flowers into which I fell....'"

Franz slowly passed his hand across his brow.

"What feelings can you expect me to have towards Marie Louise? If Josephine had been my mother, my father would not be buried in Saint Helena, and I should not be in Vienna.... Oh, Marie Louise may be well-meaning, but she is weak. She was not the wife my father deserved."

All at once, he burst into tears and flung himself into Prokesch's arms. He hid his streaming face against his friend's breast. Taken aback, Prokesch did not know what to say to comfort him. Then Franz stepped back, laid his two hands on Prokesch's shoulders, gazed into his eyes anxiously, and said:

"You yourself have no respect for her, have you?"

Embarrassed, Prokesch murmured:

"She turned out as she was bound to turn out.... Doubtless she was not the right wife for Napoleon.... But he chose her.... And she is your mother...."

There was a long silence. Then, in a low voice, Franz said:

"That's true. She is my mother.... I wish I could love her as I love my father. But I can't, I can't!..."

CHAPTER LIII

THE SINKING FLAME

ON November 16th, 1831, the Duke of Reichstadt left Schönbrunn and settled in Vienna for the winter. He had a cough and looked ill; but he insisted on taking part in all the Court shooting-parties.

Rising before dawn, he went out into the icy morning mist without thinking about taking care of his weak lungs. He stalked game until he exhausted himself. He became weak and he shivered with fever; but he insisted that his health had never been better, for fear lest his return to military duty should be still further postponed.

At the Hofburg he resumed his monotonous life, with no light on the horizon of his future. His days passed by regulated by the rules of etiquette. The sole distractions were his occasional *tête-à-têtes* with Sophie and his studious evenings in Prokesch's company.

His friend became more and more dear to him. Perfidiously his entourage tried to turn him against Prokesch, whom they represented as a spy planted on him by Metternich. But Franz scorned such calumnies. He was sure of his friend.

"Those people know nothing whatever about you," he said, opening his arms and stretching out his hands to Prokesch, "but I know you."

Sometimes, however, he felt sorry for Prokesch and

blamed himself for the hard things that were said about him.

"My friend," he said one day, "if you only knew how painful it is to me to hear you so defamed!"

But Prokesch shook his fine head and replied, with quiet pride:

"Anything those rascals may say about me is a matter of indifference to me, Franz. We know one another's worth."

The two of them held themselves high above the mud in which the duke's entourage raked, in an atmosphere purified by their friendship, in which they could look into each other's eyes and see the depths of their souls.

Franz suffered more than ever from the mediocrity of his military household. Every day gave him fresh proof that his officers were nonentities.

"And these men by whom I am surrounded," he said to Prokesch, "are the men who are supposed to set me an example!"

Finding his friend at such a loose end, Prokesch sought something to occupy him.

Only the love of a woman could, to some extent, relieve Franz's distress. But the choice of one was a delicate matter. What he needed was an intelligent, understanding girl, who was not mercenary and would remain in the background, and with whom he could, for a little while, forget his troubles and warm his heart.

Just at this period, Franz started going to the Opera almost every evening. He had noticed a young actress who was making her first appearance there. Her name was Theresa Peche. She was pretty and shapely, and her reputation was blameless. Obviously Franz found her attractive.

Prokesch was preparing to make an overture toward her when Franz anticipated him by calling on her, with Neipperg. Theresa welcomed him with such coquetry, and

flung herself at his head with such clearly calculated graciousness, that Franz feared a trap. He took his leave, and the pretty actress saw no more of him.

About the same time, he developed a warm affection for Countess Pisani, who had the amber complexion and the dark eyes of a gypsy. It was said that her husband had bought her from a gypsy tribe when she was quite young, and had her brought up as though she were in a harem, until he married her at the age of sixteen.

Her beauty was enhanced by her halo of mystery. Franz saw her several times. He used to dance with her. People stood still in drawing-rooms to stare at them, so perfect a pair did they make when they were waltzing.

Count Pisani judged it prudent to seek an appointment abroad. One evening, at a gala, Franz failed to see the countess. He made inquiries in all directions. When he learnt the truth, he shook his head and said, sadly:

"I am fated never to keep anything I want...."

By this time he had more or less given up ever seeing his grandfather alone. The two of them had nothing left to say to one another, and the gulf which divided them grew deeper day by day, until it became a regular abyss.

One day in December, Franz said to the Emperor:

"If my father were still alive, I would use all my efforts to secure his return to France."

"You would be quite right," replied Francis, "and I would even help you with money; if not openly, at least in secret."

The old man's chicken-hearted, not to say craven, soul was exactly reflected in these prudent words. Franz knew that he had nothing to expect from him, any more than from the rest of his Austrian relatives.

Henceforth his mind was made up. He would make his escape....

Prokesch finally agreed to go with him. They made their plans, and awaited only a favorable opportunity: some event abroad which would serve as a sure summons.

"We shall set off one night," said Prokesch, "make our way through the Tyrol, and take refuge with Madame Mère in Rome."

Franz watched the horizon for his chance of flinging himself into this adventure, just as Leander, crazy with love, flung himself into the sea to meet Hero....

Franz took Sophie's hands, and, with that flame in his eyes which transfigured him, said to her:

"Do you know, on January 9th I'm going to take part in the review of the Guard at the Hofburg?"

He was delighted at the success of his efforts. After besieging his grandfather for days, he had at length obtained permission to resume his military duties. In the month of December, the Emperor appointed him second-in-command of Wasa's regiment, and he was impatient to parade in his new uniform.

"Will you come and see me?" he asked Sophie.

"Of course I will."

They went on to talk about the journey to Hungary which Sophie was soon to make with her husband. Saying nothing about her own grief, she tried to diminish the importance of her separation from Franz.

"When you are gone," he said, sadly, "what shall I do without you in this prisonlike palace?"

"I shall be back in the spring," Sophie assured him. "Besides, you will have Prokesch."

"Yes, of course," said Franz, morosely, "but nobody can take your place."

More than ever, he needed her, both as a woman and as a friend, to help him to live.

Then, as though the news would in some way restore his confidence in himself, Sophie told him, with subdued eagerness:

"I'm expecting another child."

Franz flushed.

"When is it coming into the world?"

Sophie smiled at his impatience.

"In the month of July, I think."

Franz brooded for a moment or two. Then he murmured:

"Who knows where I shall be then?"

"Perhaps on a throne," said Sophie.

On January 9th, faithful to her promise, Sophie watched the duke parading with his battalion in the courtyard of the Hofburg. She sat at a window with Baroness von Sturmfeder. It was very cold, with snow threatening.

Sophie admired the ease with which Franz handled his big black horse. Holding his head proudly erect in his white pelisse, he set her thinking of a young god of war. But how pale he was, how thin!

When the review was over, Franz looked up and caught sight of Sophie. He brandished his sword in salute. She clapped her hands and blew him a kiss. Franz caught it in its flight as though it were a flower, clapped spurs to his horse, and rode away at a gallop, leaving Baron Moll toiling after him.

Hard facts lost no time in convincing Franz that he had over-estimated his strength in his insistence upon returning to his military duties.

On January 16, 1832, he insisted upon attending General von Siegenthal's funeral at the head of his battalion. He had to stand motionless for a long time in front of his men. The sky was overcast, and the frost bit through the

uniform into his flesh. Finally the procession started. When he reached the Josefplatz, Franz turned round to shout an order.

Not a sound came from his mouth. He had suddenly lost his voice. Then his head went round. He fainted and had to be taken back to the Hofburg.

He went to bed with his teeth chattering. For a week fever devoured him, and day and night a cough hammered at his chest like a battering-ram.

Malfatti treated him for bilious fever; but the patient refused to take his medicine. He was convinced that the doctor was wrong about the origin of the complaint from which he was suffering.

"No, no, doctor," he said, "I am sure I am affected by the same disease that attacked my father. I shall die of cancer of the stomach."

With all the arguments he could muster, Malfatti combated this unhappy idea, which Franz had derived from Antommarchi's *Memoirs*. He succeeded in getting Franz to agree that the main causes of his illness were his rapid growth and congestion of the liver. He kept on repeating the same advice.

"Avoid all violent exercise, and don't talk much in order to spare your throat. Stick to your diet. In the spring, go and take the waters at Ischl. There salt baths, vapor baths and the pure air will soon put you right."

Slowly the duke recovered. Meanwhile his illness gave him an excuse for refusing an invitation from Marshal Maison, the French ambassador in Vienna, who asked him to a ball at the embassy.

"In any case," he said, "I couldn't have accepted. It would have looked as though I were recognizing the usurper and the government which banished me."

Some days later, he experienced a keen satisfaction.

Thanks to his intervention with Kutschera and, through him, with the Emperor, he managed to get Prokesch promoted to lieutenant-colonel.

But this mark of the Emperor's favor towards Prokesch at once alarmed Metternich. From various directions disquieting reports about the two friends' plans had already come to his ears. He decided that it was once more essential to break off this undesirable relationship.

So, at the beginning of February, he summoned Prokesch and entrusted him with an appointment in Italy, where fresh disturbances had broken out. Prokesch was to set off at once. He had no alternative but to obey.

Again the two friends had to face the pain of parting. Franz, in particular, was overwhelmed by this unexpected blow. He wept and clasped Prokesch to his heart. Then he relapsed into silence, surrendered to despair. Prokesch tried to comfort him.

"This journey of mine will not be a waste of time, Franz. When I get to Rome, I shall go and see Madame Laetitia, your cousin the Countess Camerata, and the Pope. I shall try to influence him in your favor. Besides, I shall do all I can to make your flight a success. It should not be long delayed; for, in my opinion, Louis Philippe cannot last much longer."

But Franz fretted, exasperated at his impotence to do anything to support his own cause.

"Ah, Prokesch," he said, "I beg of you, speak up boldly for me wherever you go!"

He gave Prokesch his sword, with his name engraved upon it. Prokesch, for his part, made Franz a present of a robe which he had brought back with him from Egypt.

At the last moment, Franz was strong despite his tears.

"Go, my friend!" he said. "I trust you. In both our hearts, there is no room for pettiness."

Prokesch left the room. Franz could hear his footsteps dying away along the passages of the old palace. Then he rushed to the window. In a moment or two, he saw Prokesch making his way across the courtyard. After a few yards, Prokesch turned round, looked up at the window, and waved his arm by way of farewell.

The two friends were never to meet again.

One by one, the days passed by, amid cold, boredom and loneliness. Franz had nobody near him but people to whom he was indifferent. They buzzed around him like irritating flies. Sophie was still away in Hungary. Prokesch was in Italy, and Franz had no news of him. He wandered from one window of his apartments to another for hours at a time.

Every now and then, an attack of coughing doubled him up. He stopped walking about, sank onto his couch, and painfully got his breath again. There he lay, with his limbs lax and his eyes closed, not even summoning up the strength to open a book.

When he raised his eyes, he caught sight of the portrait of his father opposite him. He felt the weight of those heavy eyes upon him. They seemed to understand.

He had no heart to go on living. What a life it was that he led!

He got up at ten o'clock, went for a short walk, and had dinner. In the evening, he went to the theater. He spent the rest of his time listening to the gossip of visitors who either treated him with suspicion or hoped to get something out of him. He had to drag himself about. He had no appetite, and he slept badly.

At nightfall fever throbbed in his veins, burnt in his eyes, and flushed his cheeks. He went to bed with his

breath whistling, sank into sleep, and awakened in the night soaked with an icy sweat.

But, whenever he was asked how he was, he replied, with assurance:

"Why, I'm very well!"

He said so to himself with so much conviction that he ended by persuading his entourage that it was true. He obtained permission to go out for short rides on horseback. But he lost no time in abusing the privilege. Had not Kutschera said that he was nothing but a bedraggled chick, and that he took care of himself like a woman? He would show them what care he took of himself!

He went out riding in any weather: cold, rain, mist. With his hair flying in the wind and the collar of his cloak open, he galloped until he was breathless. He came back soaked with sweat, and went out again without changing his underclothes. He piled up challenges to death.

Standeiski and Moll, who went out riding with him, took no notice. Malfatti said nothing, and even gave up venturing to reproach him for his imprudence. Nobody had enough courage, or enough affection for him, to tell him, in a tone which would ring true:

"Take care! You are killing yourself!"

One afternoon, towards the end of March, he went for a long ride. He came back by himself, far ahead of his companions, with his horse jaded and lathered with foam. Excited by the open air and the sensation of speed, he could not stay indoors. He ordered his carriage and went for a drive in the Prater. When he got there, the sun was setting and an icy wind was blowing from the plains of Hungary. It chilled Franz to the bone, and he shivered in the open carriage.

All at once, the carriage lurched violently to one side. An axle had broken. Franz jumped down to the ground

unhurt. He started to return on foot; but, at the end of a few yards, he had to confess that he felt too weak. Moll brought him back to the Hofburg almost unconscious.

During the night his temperature rose, he went deaf in his left ear, and he never stopped coughing. In alarm, Malfatti called Doctors Vivenot, Wierer and Raimann into consultation.

The four of them agreed on their diagnosis. The duke was suffering from inflammation of the lungs in a particularly acute form. The doctors prescribed appropriate treatment. They were in agreement that only a long stay in a warmer country, such as Italy, could save their patient's life.

One of them, even more pessimistic than the others, went so far as to say:

"I think it would be advisable to prepare his mother for the worst.

Amid her flowers and her festivities in Parma, Marie Louise refused to believe that her son was seriously ill.

She had plenty of other things to think about. Her own health gave her anxiety, and cholera was at the gates of the city. This was no time to travel and run the risk of catching it.

So she went on holding reviews, riding along the ranks of the troops with her generals. She gave big dinner-parties, displayed herself at the theater, opened balls. Finally, she had enough to do trying to console the ladies of her Court, whom the departure of Esterhazy's regiment had thrown into consternation.

"What is to become of us?" moaned the dear creatures. "Where shall we ever find such good dancers again?"

CHAPTER LIV

ILLNESS

METTERNICH raised no objections to the duke's proposed visit to Italy. He could show himself generous at small expense. He had questioned Malfatti adroitly, and he knew the truth.

The Duke of Reichstadt was doomed. His end was only a matter of months, perhaps of weeks.

But meanwhile he seemed to be recovering. Sophie's sudden return brought him a relief more effective than any treatment. As soon as he set eyes on her he felt better. But Sophie found him so changed that she could scarcely keep the tears out of her eyes until she was alone.

Though she was in an advanced state of pregnancy, she established herself at Franz's bedside and scarcely ever left him. For his benefit she always had bright eyes, a cheerful face, words of hope on her lips. She made him take his medicines and his ass's milk mixed with Marienbad water.

Franz, for his part, asked nothing better than to be tended by her deft hands. He wanted no other voice but hers to read to him.

One day he was sitting up in bed, surrounded by books and maps which Sophie had brought him to nurture his dreams. With shining eyes and a little color in his cheeks, he set forth his plans.

"First I shall go to Schönbrunn. Then I'll go to Italy as soon as I am fit to stand the journey."

"You must be sensible and wait till you're really better," Sophie warned him. "It's a long way...."

Franz smiled. As if he hadn't thought of that!

"They've ordered a very comfortable berlin for me," he replied. "I shall be able to sleep in it just as though I were in bed.... I shall travel by easy stages. In a fortnight, or three weeks at the most, I shall be in Naples."

He looked up, and his face assumed an ecstatic expression.

"For the first time, I shall see the sea. I shall see another sky. I shall be among people to whom I am a stranger, a man just like any other man."

He buttressed his dreams with memories drawn from his reading. He built up the new world in which he was going to live.

"I shall have a white villa on a hill planted with olive and orange groves, looking out on the blue waters of the bay. Upon them the white sails of boats will mingle with the white wings of seagulls. From my terrace, I shall be able to see the island of Capri and Mount Vesuvius. In the evening, when the air is scented with lemons and ripe figs, people will come and play serenades to me on their guitars. I shall feel the sun on me from morning till night. I shall be warm. It won't hurt me to breathe any more. I..."

A fit of coughing interrupted him. A cruel spasm shook his wasted body. Sophie could hear his lungs laboring, his throat rattling.

"Stop!" she exclaimed. "Don't talk so much!"

She raised his curls with one hand, and wiped his damp brow with the other. He kissed her fingers as they fluttered over him.

"It's nothing," he said. "It's all over now. I'm quite all

right.... My stay in Italy will make a new man of me. When I'm cured, I shall go to Rome and see my grandmother Laetitia, my uncles, my aunts, all my family. I'll meet Prokesch again. How happy we shall be!... It was in Italy that my father won his first victories. I'll take Prokesch with me, and the two of us will visit all the battlefields which witnessed Napoleon's first fame: Arcole, Rivoli, Millesimo, Lodi, Marengo...."

Sophie felt like closing her ears. She listened to him with clenched teeth, choking down like bitter pills the sobs that rose in her throat.

At the end of two weeks of treatment, Franz was able to get up. To harden himself, he decided to take the air. One afternoon, he went out in a closed berlin, driven slowly.

The people of Vienna looked around as the carriage passed them and they glanced inside it. They saw the duke lying back on cushions, wrapped in rugs, with dark rings beneath his eyes and his jawbones prominent in his fleshless face.

Men could not suppress their surprise. Was this really the handsome young man for whom they all had a secret affection?

Women murmured a prayer and crossed themselves as though in the presence of death.

Hartmann kept the Emperor, who was away from Vienna, regularly informed about his grandson's health.

Any improvement in it was only fleeting. On May 18th, the general reported a fresh relapse. The duke was so weak that he was unable to write to his grandfather to thank him for appointing him full colonel in Gustavus Wasa's regiment.

On May 22nd Franz was moved to Schönbrunn.

When he arrived there from Vienna, he was setting eyes for the last time on the outside of Maria Theresa's palace, with its yellow roughcast front, its green shutters, and its great courtyard which looked so like a parade-ground that it was surprising not to see conscripts drilling in it.

The sun shone brilliantly, the park was clothed in tender green, and thousands of birds were singing.

To give the duke more sunlight, his apartments had been changed. They were now situated on the first floor in the great left wing. They consisted of the three large rooms in which Napoleon had lived on two separate occasions, after Austerlitz and after Wagram.

The bedroom had two windows. It was hung with green silk. A Gobelins tapestry representing Austrian troopers took up the whole of one wall. Country scenes were painted over the door, and a portrait of the Emperor Francis I figured on a panel.

Franz refused to use the bed of state, which was too gilded and too elaborately carved for his liking. He asked for a camp-bed to be set up in a corner of the room.

On one side, the room opened into the "porcelain chamber," all blue and white. On the other, it opened into the "lacquer salon"—black, gold and crimson—which Napoleon had used as his study, and from which, for several months, he had ruled half Europe.

During the first week after his arrival at Schönbrunn, Franz seemed to be better. His fever diminished, he spat less, and his nights were less restless.

Every morning, he went for a drive to the Kaninchenberg, where he drank fresh cow's or ass's milk. Sometimes he gave orders to be driven on to Baden. In Helenenthal, he had the horses slowed down to a walk, while, with melancholy eyes, he gazed at the spot where, a soul in pain, he had tried to build up his future out of dreams.

But, at the end of a few days, his pulse quickened. In the evening his temperature went up. He would have been glad if he could have escaped the night that awaited him, with its sweats and its nightmares. His doctors ordered leeches at his temples and poultices on his chest, and cut out the ass's milk, which upset his digestion.

His exercise was now reduced to short walks with Sophie in the park in the afternoon. Sophie had reached the last stages of her pregnancy, but she refused to leave Franz's side.

He walked beside her with dragging steps, bent like an old man. When he felt too weak to walk, she had him borne in a carrying-chair to a little open summer-house which stood in the private gardens. An eagle with outstretched wings decorated its ceiling. In front of it lay a sward on which wild flowers grew. A fountain sang amid the grass, and a belt of great pines isolated the spot from the world.

Sometimes little Francis Joseph went there with Franz and Sophie, and Franz played with him. The boy realized that his grown-up friend was ill. Whenever he saw Malfatti, he clasped his hands and said:

"'Alfatti, my dear 'Alfatti, please cure him!"

One afternoon Franz was lying in the summer-house in an easy chair. He wore a woolen nightshirt with white and red stripes and white breeches, and a bright silk scarf was knotted round his neck. Sophie was reading to him.

The afternoon flowed by like a soft, shining stream. Franz stared at his parchment-like hands, from which life was slowly ebbing away.

"Will they ever hold a sword again?" he sighed.

Sophie tried to awaken a little hope in him. She talked about Louis Philippe. It was said that his position was going from bad to worse.

But Franz shook his head wearily. He had ceased to believe in his future.

"I shall never ascend the throne of France, Sophie. So I don't want to go on living...."

A little later, he sank into a doze. The silence was peopled only by the hum of insects and the slow song of the wind in the pines.

With her hands in her lap, Sophie gazed at Franz. Her heart was wrung. He had only a shred of flesh left on his bones, and every day he became more wasted. Now that his eyes were closed and did not light it up, his fleshless face, with its sharp outline of the nose, its sunken sockets and its bloodless lips, presented a picture which filled Sophie with despair.

All at once, a fit of coughing roused him out of his torpor. It doubled him up. He clutched at his chest and then at his back, as though to lay hands on a wild beast which was drinking the life-blood out of him. He gasped for breath, with his eyes starting out of his head. Sophie could see his shoulder-bones sticking out through his woolen nightshirt, and his throat alternately swelling and contracting.

At length he recovered his breath a little. He put his handkerchief to his mouth. It was at once dyed red.

At the sight of that blood, Sophie felt as though a knife had been plunged into her own breast. But the smiling face which she turned towards him showed nothing of her fears.

Franz hurriedly hid his handkerchief. He assumed a sprightly air too.

"Well, that's over, you see," he said.

Sophie exerted herself to lie as much to him as to herself.

"Rest," she replied, "and you'll soon get well. . . . I think you look better than you did yesterday."

She put her arms round him, and he clung to her. Echoing in her own body she could hear the hasty beating of his heart, laboring against the ills which assailed him on all sides. She would gladly have given her life for him. She bent over him and kissed him on the eyes. He opened them, and at once they were full of all the light of the sky. He felt as though she had brought him to life again.

On June 12th, Franz felt well enough to go out for a drive. He went to Baden again, and then gave orders to be driven to the castle of Laxenburg. There he got out and talked for a time with the officers on guard before setting off again.

On his way back, a violent storm broke. The carriage was an open one, and in a few minutes Franz was soaked to the skin. He was brought back to Schönbrunn shivering with cold.

That night he went to bed consumed by fever, with his breath whistling in his throat. He coughed constantly, and complained of a sharp pain in his right side. During the night, after a particularly bad fit of coughing, he spat blood by the mouthful. Moll, who was holding a basin for him, had his hands all spattered with it.

The next day the doctors diagnosed a burst abscess on the lung. Malfatti felt that it was his duty to tell Sophie the truth.

"He is doomed," he said. "It is only a matter of a week or two. . . ."

Sophie went white. She had never dared to confess the truth to herself. Malfatti's words gave it shape in a doom against which there was no appeal. She felt as though she herself were condemned to death.

"But is there nothing to be done?" she pleaded.

"Nothing, alas. It is too late now. He should have been sent to Italy a year ago...."

Without troubling to wipe away the tears that streamed down her face, Sophie stammered:

"And now?..."

Embarrassed by the pain in her eyes, fixed upon him, Malfatti looked away.

"We must ask Father Wagner, the chaplain, to prepare him for extreme unction."

Sophie flung up her hands in horror.

"Extreme unction? Would you display all the panoply of death in front of the boy? Why, it would frighten him to death!... No, no, I don't want him to know that he is dying."

"But, Your Highness, you cannot let him die without the consolation of the Church."

Sophie thought that over.

"His mother, his grandfather, his whole family have deserted him," she said. "I alone am responsible for taking care of him.... I'll think of something."

Her love helped her to find a way. She went to Franz and said to him:

"Franz, I have a favor to ask you. I want you to take Communion with me.... We will unite our prayers, first for you to get well, and then for the blessing of God on the child whom I am about to bring into the world.... You won't refuse me, will you, Franz?"

He would not dream of refusing her. He accepted anything that Sophie suggested to him with implicit trust. He had never been much inclined towards religion, which he regarded above all as an influence essential for the maintenance of social order. But he accepted Sophie's proposal gladly.

Sophie made ready for this virgin marriage in a state of mystical exaltation. She felt that after it a divine link would always unite her to the man she loved....

On June 20th, Franz made his confession at ten o'clock. At noon he took Communion.

The Holy Sacrament was carried under a canopy from the chapel to his apartments. A long, silent procession followed it, headed by all the princes and princesses present at Schönbrunn. All the women servants in the palace, asked permission to take part in the procession.

In accordance with custom, the dying man should have received the viaticum in the presence of the whole Court. On this occasion, only the priest carrying the consecrated ciborium and the sacristan entered Franz's room. The archdukes and archduchesses assembled silently in the next room.

Franz lay in bed with Sophie on her knees beside him, smiling at him. He had no eyes for anybody else. The prayers were said in a low voice. The chaplain officiated rapidly, and, once he had given Franz and Sophie Communion, left them alone together.

Franz took Sophie's hand and raised it to his lips.

"I think I feel better now," he murmured.

Metternich and Hartmann went on keeping the Emperor, who was at Trieste, closely informed about the duke's condition. The Chancellor's reports held out no hope.

"I cannot see the smallest possibility of his recovery," he wrote.

Meanwhile Marie Louise, for her part, still refused to recognize that her son was gravely ill. She had gone to Trieste to join her father, and she shrank from undertaking the journey to Vienna. Her state of health led her to fear fatigue, and the prospect of such a long journey

scared her. She felt weak, and suffered from alternate fits of being cold and hot. Her doctors attributed them to the state of her nerves.

But in Vienna people found it strange that, as a mother, she should not hasten to her son's side. Her indifference towards him was severely condemned.

The Viennese themselves anxiously followed the progress of the duke's illness. Every morning a crowd flocked to the gates of Schönbrunn for news. They questioned every servant who came out of the palace.

"How is he? Did he have a good night?"

Many of them went away happy for the day when they heard that the duke had slept better.

The Emperor, better informed about Franz's condition than was the duke's own mother, was finally driven to order Marie Louise to go to Vienna. An indisposition compelled her to postpone her start for a few days. Finally she set off, traveling by easy stages. She reached Schönbrunn on June 24th. Her son had been expecting her for a week.

"She will be too late," Sophie had thought, with secret resentment.

When he heard that his mother was on her way, Franz wanted to get up and go to meet her. But he had not the strength, and, after a vain attempt to rise, he fell back exhausted on his pillows.

Finally, accompanied by General Hartmann and Malfatti, Marie Louise made her appearance. Mother and son embraced.

Then, sitting at his beside, Marie Louise did her best not to look at Franz. Her heart was wrung.

Was this really her son, her son whom she had left two years before so handsome, with all the joys of life before him? She could scarcely recognize him. Of his body, which

looked taller than ever now he was lying down, little more than a skeleton remained. His face was fleshless, his eyes were cavernous, his hair had lost its luster. His complexion was assuming the color of the earth in which he was soon to rest.

Franz strove to speak, but a fit of coughing prostrated him on his pillows, with a reddish foam bubbling at his lips. At the end of her tether, Marie Louise fled into the next room and burst into tears.

When she had bathed her eyes and managed to make herself look presentable, she went back to Franz's bedroom. He smiled at her, and signed to her to come to his bedside. Then he pointed to the bunches of violets on every table and the letters strewn on his bed.

"People send me any amount of flowers," he said, "and also all kinds of recipes to cure me. The Viennese are very kind to me...."

He went on to talk about his plans for his coming journey to Italy. Marie Louise listened to him with her head bowed. She did not dare to look at him. She could not get used to his voice, either: a tired-out voice, like that of an old man. She took his hand, squeezed it, and nodded assent to everything he said.

In her bright dress, with her high complexion, her soft flesh and her healthy looks, she felt out of her element in this room where death already seemed to be beside her.

Somebody seemed to whisper to her:

"This is your fault. You never loved him. You never loved him...."

CHAPTER LV

THE LAST DAYS

Two weeks passed. Franz became weaker and weaker. He seldom left his bed. When he was able to get up, all he could do was drag himself, with Moll's help, out to his balcony. Wrapped in his dressing-gown, with a rug over his knees, he lay there in the sun, with his head in the shade of an awning.

There he spent part of the afternoon, with his eyes closed and his soul already escaped from his body. When he opened his eyes, they rested on a familiar scene: to the left, the sentry in his stone box; on either side, the somber hedgerows, relieved by white statues; in the middle distance, the paths, the ponds and the lawns; and, on the horizon, the Glorietta, that bright portico on its grassy hillock.

Viennese walking in the park looked up at the duke's balcony, and went their way reassured when they caught a glimpse of his little nightcap and his fair curls straying out of it.

He had lost all taste for anything. Even reading tired him. He refused his food and spurned his medicines. His sufferings made him irritable. He lost his temper with his attendants and his visitors. Foresti and Obenaus called several times a week to inquire about him; but he declined to receive them. One day Marmont asked to see him.

"Tell the Marshal I'm asleep," he said. "I won't let him see me in this state."

Some days earlier, his former tutor, Dietrichstein, had come to take leave of him. He was setting off for Munich, where his daughter was soon to give birth to a child.

Metternich, too, paid a visit to Franz. But Franz scarcely listened to what he said, and after a few moments turned his head away. The Chancellor did not mind. All that concerned him was to satisfy himself about Franz's condition. His task was coming to an end; but he meant to remain on the watch to the very graveside itself.

Louis Bonaparte, Marchand, Montholon and Gourgaud had once more intervened on the Duke of Reichstadt's behalf. Metternich had ignored all their letters. Napoleon's son was condemned to die an Austrian prince.

Every afternoon Marie Louise came to see him. She sat at his bedside, and they talked. Franz seemed glad to have her with him, and smiled at her as he made plans for his future. Marie Louise never stayed long. She could not endure the sight of his life ebbing away without any hope of saving it.

Sophie took her place. Though her child was on the point of being born, she refused to leave her "poor Franz." She insisted on remaining beside him, as though death would not come for him so long as she was there. With her body deformed and her face drawn by the fatigue of pregnancy, she stood her ground gallantly.

On July 5th Franz missed her and made inquiries for her. He was told that her pains had begun and that she had gone to bed. All day long he kept sending Lambert, his valet, to inquire about her. The thought that she might be having a hard delivery made him restless. He imagined he could hear her cries.

The next morning, Marie Louise came to tell him that

Sophie had given birth to a son, who was to be called Ferdinand Maximilian. The news calmed him down at once.

"A son, a son," he kept on murmuring, and two big tears rolled down his cheeks.

The heat became overwhelming. It completed Franz's exhaustion. He was already consumed by fever, which now gave him no respite. At night he could not get to sleep. He tossed and turned, struggling against the baleful influence which kept the air from getting into his lungs. His nightshirt and his sheets were soaked with sweat and had to be changed several times a night. His feet swelled, and turned the color of flesh from which the blood has withdrawn. They weighed on his body like icy stones. No potion could diminish the violence of his fits of coughing, which left him inert and gasping. What he spat filled the room with a frightful stench.

When his mother was with him, he exerted himself to conceal his condition. He declared that he felt better, and that he would soon be well again. But, once she had left the room, he let himself sink into dejection, as though into deep, dark water. Sometimes a presentiment of his approaching end touched him. One day he said to Moll:

"My birth and my death—that is my whole history."

Some months earlier, Marie Louise had sent him the cradle presented to him by the city of Paris. He inquired where it was.

"My cradle and my grave will not be far from one another," he said.

He felt so tired, so worn out, that he wondered whether it would not be all for the best. Had not the name of Napoleon proved too heavy a burden for his weak shoulders?

Sometimes, during his short intervals of drowsiness, his

spirit went wandering in search of his father's memory, with all the acute vision of the dying, to whom there is no longer past, present and future, but a world in which all these link up, merge into one another and become unified.

Franz's room, in which Napoleon had lived, in which he had nurtured his great dream, in which the birth of the King of Rome had been foreshadowed, became peopled with phantoms.

A shadow crept across the threshold, wrapped in a bearskin. It was Roustan, Napoleon's Mameluke guard.

Another shadow moved about the room. It had its head down and its hands behind its back. It glided noiselessly over the polished floor. It stopped and went on again. Then it turned around, and Franz recognized his father.

Napoleon gazed at his son with the sad look which he had in his eyes in Gérard's portrait of him. His lips moved. They kept on repeating two words. Franz could not hear them; but he could guess them from the movements of his father's lips.

"Forgive me!..."

For several days Franz had taken nothing but a few spoonfuls of barley broth. Then the state of his throat no longer enabled him to swallow any food at all. Malfatti sent for a wet-nurse, who gave him her breast.

By now every hour found him weaker and more resigned.

The heat of the summer became excessive. On July 21st, from every point of the horizon thunder-storms concentrated their artillery on Schönbrunn. In a few moments it was capped with forks of fire. The skies opened in downpour of tropical violence.

A flash of lightning shattered one of the two eagles on the red marble obelisks at the entrance to the palace.

People inside the palace stared at one another aghast. Everybody felt that now Fate had issued its decree.

In his bed, Franz tossed and turned. He gasped for air. He felt as though he were breathing fire.

"Oh, doctor, how it hurts!" he said to Malfatti, pitifully. "When am I going to be done with this wretched life of mine?..."

The doctor said a few hopeful words. Then Marie Louise came into the room. Franz turned his head towards her and smiled.

"How do you feel, my boy?"

"Not too bad, Mother, not too bad."

He paused for a moment, and then, stopping after each word, as though he were ashamed to say it, he went on:

"Still, if anything happens to me, promise me, Mother, that you'll give Prokesch my books and my saber: the one my father brought back from Egypt with him."

Dreadfully pale, Marie Louise looked away.

"Yes, Franz," she murmured, "I promise."

When she left the room, Malfatti followed her into the lacquer salon. On the threshold, he whispered to her:

"Courage, Madame!... It is only a question of hours now."

On the same day, Prokesch presented himself at the Rinuccini Palace on the Piazza de Venezia in Rome, where Madame Laetitia lived.

He had not forgotten his promise to Franz to call on the "mother of kings." But, during the three months he had been living in the Eternal City, hitherto no opportunity had presented itself. Now chance had served him. He had made the acquaintance of Colonel Prince Pompei

Gabrieli, who had married Lucien Bonaparte's daughter, Charlotte. The princess told him that Madame Laetitia would be very glad to meet her grandson's friend. Charlotte offered to introduce Prokesch to Napoleon's mother, and July 21st was fixed as the date.

Prokesch glanced up at the outside of the palace. He was struck by its severe style of architecture, its towering walls, its cornices like those of a fortress.

Escorted by Charlotte, he entered it. As soon as he set foot across the threshold, he seemed to be plunged into a world of silence. They followed a long paved passage. Charlotte opened a door at the end of it.

Prokesch found himself in a great drawing-room, very dim and cool. Heavy window-curtains permitted only a scanty light to penetrate into it. With his eyes still dazzled by the sunlight outside, Prokesch managed to make out the gleaming outlines of portraits hanging on the walls and ornate furniture.

When his eyes became used to the dimness, he saw an old lady, clad in black from head to foot, lying on a couch. She stood up. She was almost blind and semi-paralyzed. Leaning on Princess Charlotte's arm and on a stick, she came forward a few steps to meet her visitor, bowed to him, and invited him to sit down.

"I am very glad to see you, Monsieur Prokesch," she said, "very glad indeed. You are the first person associated with my grandson with whom I have ever had an opportunity to talk a little about him.... You have been near him. You have lived in his company. You are luckier than I am."

She spoke in a gentle voice, in rather incorrect French, but choosing her words carefully. She went on at once to besiege Prokesch with questions.

"Is he well looked after? Is he well treated? Has he the proper people around him?"

Prokesch reassured her. Franz was surrounded with every attention and with all the respect due to him.

Madame Laetitia heaved a sigh of relief.

"I'm glad to hear that. I was so much afraid about him. But I believe what you say, for I know that he has implicit confidence in you and that you deserve it."

She went on to recall the past. She found traits of resemblance between Franz's character and his father's.

"When Napoleon was a boy, he was lazy-minded. He was the despair of his teachers. He took that to heart, and exerted himself to do better. One day he came home with a good report. He was as proud as a conqueror in his triumphal chariot."

Then she expressed alarm about the state of her grandson's health. The papers announced that he was very ill.

Prokesch felt somewhat embarrassed about answering her. What did he himself know about Franz's state of health? Nothing but what he had learned from the newspapers and from people who claimed to be well informed. He distrusted both of them. Since he left Vienna, as a matter of prudence he had kept up no correspondence with Franz. But the news that he was dangerously ill left him incredulous.

"Madame," he said, "you must not believe everything the papers say. So many people have an interest in spreading false reports about the prince. To be sure, he has a weak chest, and his rapid growth has tried him severely. But he is in the hands of the best doctors in Vienna. His constitution is a strong one, and it will soon get the upper hand."

Madame Laetitia listened to him, her head, with its sightless eyes, a little on one side in order to hear better, and her frail little hands, criss-crossed with lines, lying in

her lap on her black dress. She started pouring out her memories.

"Yes," she said, "he's very tall, the dear boy, isn't he? Six feet two, so I've been told. Almost a giant.... I find it hard to imagine him. When I last saw him, at Blois in 1814, he was just three. I can still see him, with his fair curls, in his little blue suit.... What a temper he got into when we took him away from the Tuileries! How he screamed! But, after all, he was quite right.... He was such a pretty child. He was so promising...."

Her voice broke off, like pearls falling to the ground when their string snaps. She stammered a few further words, and then for a while she could say no more. Prokesch respected her silence. At length, in a firmer tone of voice, she went on:

"What is going to become of him? I'm eighty-four, I'm too old, I shall never live to see it; but I am sure that some day he will recover the throne of France.... His rule of life is to be found in his father's last wishes. Let him observe them, and his hour will come."

"You need have no misgivings in that respect, Madame," said Prokesch. "He knows the Emperor's will by heart. It is his gospel."

Madame Laetitia's face assumed an ecstatic expression. A glow of certainty spread through her. She stood up.

"Come this way," she said. "I want to show you that we haven't forgotten him either.... And it's seventeen years since I last heard from him...."

Still leaning on Princess Charlotte's arm and on her stick, she led Prokesch into a little room in which the dimness of a church prevailed. It contained busts of all her children, arranged along the walls. Those of Napoleon and the Duke of Reichstadt were side by side. Madame Mère pointed to her grandson's bust.

"That was the marble bust which the Emperor had at Longwood."

She walked past the busts of her other children. At those of Lucien and Joseph she stopped and said a few words. Then she recalled Marie Louise, with bitterness.

"She was the source of all our misfortunes."

Prokesch studied the old lady furtively. Her body was extremely thin, but the carriage of her head was still proud and regal, despite her age. Her features remained pure, and her profile had all the finish of an antique medallion. But a cataract had drawn its white film like a curtain across her eyes, once black and brilliant. Prokesch was reminded of Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi.

They went back to the drawing-room. Madame Laetitia looked for a lock of Napoleon's hair, which she wanted her visitor to take to Franz; but she could not find it.

"This evening," she said, "I'll send you a portrait of myself. Please give it to my dear grandson. At the back of it he will find a lock of his father's hair."

She added that she would also send Prokesch two other miniatures, one of Bonaparte when he was Consul, and the other of Caroline, and a gaming-box in old lacquer, containing mother-of-pearl counters stamped with Napoleon's arms.

"Tell my grandson that his father used them at Saint Helena...."

Prokesch realized that the time had come for him to take his leave. He bowed before Madame Laetitia and kissed her hand.

Then the old lady made a great effort. She drew herself up to her full height. She seemed clad in haughty majesty. She raised her hands, trembling like all the rest of her body, groped in the air, and laid them on Prokesch's head. He went down on one knee.

"Since I cannot go to see my grandson, let the blessing of his grandmother, who will soon leave this world, rest upon your head. My prayers, my tears, my vows will be with him till the last moment of my life. Take to him what I lay on your head, what I entrust to your heart...."

Prokesch rose to his feet. With Princess Charlotte still supporting her, Madame Laetitia held out her arms to him. She held him clasped to her heart for a little while, with her sightless eyes uplifted towards Heaven.

CHAPTER LVI

DEATH

THE MADURA ...

It was the last morning of Franz's life.

Outside the sun shone, the birds sang and women in bright dresses walked in the park....

In his bed, Franz gasped for air, with his mouth open. Every breath tore the flesh of his chest. Fever was making an end of him. Delirium had him in its grip. He writhed, soaked in streaming sweat.

"Harness the horses!" he cried. "I must go to meet my father...."

His eyes roved around him, seeking the faces of those who had really been fond of him.

Where was Count Dietrichstein? Where was his grandfather? Where was Sophie?

Prokesch was not there either: Prokesch, his one friend, whom he loved like a brother. Why wasn't Prokesch there?

No, he was all alone, abandoned, with nobody to protect him from death; and death was upon him....

All at once, he caught sight in a mirror of a hideous face, with eyes full of darkness. It was Death himself! The face came nearer to him. Franz wanted to run away. He flung out his hands.

Then a veil fell, the skull and the eye-sockets donned flesh, and in the mirror Franz recognized the face of Metternich.

The Chancellor had come to inquire for him. Half-hidden behind a door, he kept vigil.

After a few moments' respite, a fresh attack overtook Franz. His unendurable sufferings drew words of despair from him.

"I want to die. There is nothing left for me but death...."

When he came to himself, Malfatti was bathing his temples with eau de Cologne.

"Thank you," he said, "that does me good."

The morning passed without any further cause for alarm. Marie Louise and the Archduke Francis came to see Franz. Then he sank into a drowse.

About noon, he had a very violent fit of coughing. As he could no longer spit, with the help of linen wound round a piece of stick Moll had to clear his mouth and tongue of the pus which congested them. The fetid smell of the pus made Moll's gorge rise. Franz noticed this. He seized Moll's hand.

"What a job for you to do, my poor Moll! I am giving you a very bad time."

Moll had the courage to smile and make a joke.

"We'll forget all about it when we are in Naples."

The afternoon passed with Franz alternating between drowsing and wakefulness. Moll read aloud to him one or two chapters of Arlincourt's *The Rebels.* Lambert kept on offering his master barley water and sugared water; but Franz refused to take anything.

About five o'clock, Marie Louise came back, with General Mareschall. She stayed some time. When she had gone, Moll went on reading *The Rebels* aloud.

At eight o'clock. Franz had another attack. Malfatti looked anxious. Franz's pulse was failing.

"If he is in danger of suffocating," he said, "put poultices and blisterings on him."

A little later, while his bed was being arranged for the night, Franz asked Moll:

"What about my berlin? Is it ready yet?"

"I don't think so," replied Moll. "The coach-builder hasn't finished his work yet...."

At these words Franz lost his temper. He struck his fists on the bed.

"Then go to Koller and tell him to hurry up. I shall want that berlin soon. I won't be kept waiting for it...."

He had to drag the words painfully out of his mouth, one by one.

Lambert, the valet, carried the lamps away from the bedside and retired to the end of the room. Moll and Nickert, the doctor on duty, went into the drawing-room, leaving the door open. Franz was breathing with more and more difficulty. The rattling in his throat could be heard all over the apartments; but he seemed quiet.

A little after midnight, Moll said to Lambert:

"I think he'll live till morning. If he does, it will not devolve on us to listen to his last sigh...."

He stretched himself on a couch, exhausted, and fell asleep at once.

A little before four o'clock, he was rudely aroused from his sleep by a cry from Lambert:

"Captain Moll! Come here, quickly!"

He rushed to Franz's bedside. Franz was writhing.

"I'm dying!" he cried, in a hoarse voice. "I'm dying!"

Moll helped Nickert to lift Franz up. He was stifling, with his mouth wide open and his eyes starting out of his head.

"Call my mother!" he moaned. "Call my mother!"

Hoping that the attack would pass off, Moll signed to

Lambert, who was standing by the door, to wait for a few moments. Meanwhile the dying man went on struggling. His head hit against the marble top of the bedside table.

"Take that table away!" he cried. "I don't need anything any more...."

He seized Moll by the arm, and clutched at his chest with his other hand.

"Get me the poultices!..."

Nervous spasms distorted his features. Then he fell back, his face relaxed, and his eyes became fixed and glassy.

Moll left him in Nickert's care, and hurried to awaken the family, Malfatti and Hartmann.

When Moll came back, Franz seemed to be breathing a little more easily. The poultices had relieved his chest.

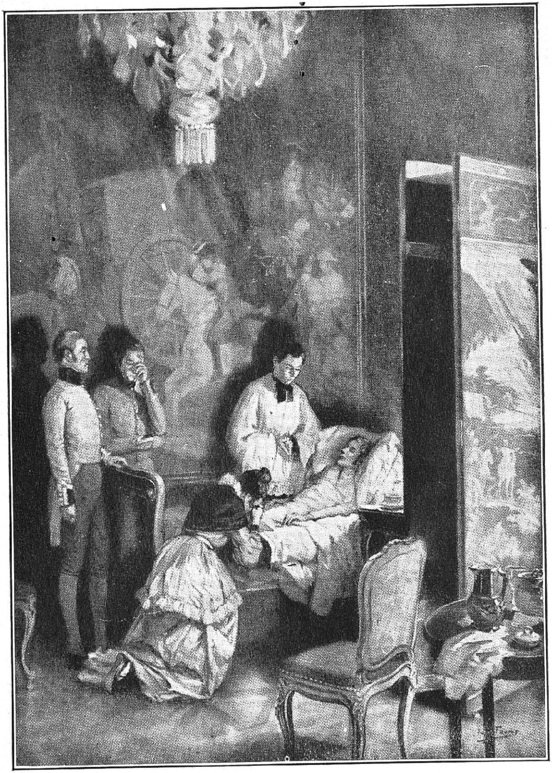
Marie Louise was the first to arive. When she entered the room, she reeled, and Moll had to give her his arm. She went and stood at the foot of the bed. Franz recognized her, and his eyes smiled at her.

One by one, other people arrived: Malfatti, Hartmann, Standeiski, Mareschall.

Finally, Moll ushered in the chaplain. He gave extreme unction to the dying man. He was a young priest, who was administering this sacrament for the first time, and he was upset. He asked whether he should read the prayers to himself or say them aloud. Franz signed to him that he would rather have them read aloud.

Everybody knelt down: Marie Louise at a chair; the Archduke Francis at the foot of the bed; the others in the background, and the servants in the next room.

In the middle of the celebration, there was a dull thud. The dying man did not hear it. Marie Louise had sunk on the floor in a faint. Malfatti revived her, and she knelt down again.



Leon Fauret

DEATH OF THE DUKE OF REICHSTADT

He died at Schönbrunn, in a room where his father, Napoleon, had slept after the battle of Wagram

Slowly Franz slipped out of life. He did not seem to be in pain any more. His passing was peaceful and gentle.

By this time it was broad daylight. But the candles in the chandeliers and on the mantelpiece went on burning, in a stifling atmosphere.

Five o'clock struck. A few minutes later, Franz turned his head from side to side, twice. Then, little by little, like water freezing over, his lips stopped moving.

Malfatti and Moll bent over him. The doctor laid his hand on Franz's forehead.

"He is cold already," he murmured.

Marie Louise overheard him. She tried to rise to her feet; but instead she fainted again. Hartmann and Mareschall escorted her back to her own apartments.

Franz, lying in his bed, still had his eyes wide open. Malfatti had to try twice before he could close them.

CHAPTER LVII

THOSE WHO MOURNED HIM

Ever since her childbirth, day by day, hour by hour, in terrible distress, Sophie had been present in spirit at Franz's death-agony.

Lying in her bed, with her eyes closed, she imagined, in despair and rebellion, the slow passing of the man she loved. She felt that she could hear his heart ceasing to beat, as the sound of a bell dies away in a night of storm.

Sometimes she sent for her newborn son, only a few days old. She kissed him. She sobbed. She kept saying:

"He mustn't die, he mustn't die!..."

Gently they told her that Franz was dead. It was such a shock that she lost consciousness. When she came to herself, she wanted to get up.

"Let me go to him!" she cried. "I must see him again. My place is with him."

They had to use force to keep her in bed. She fell into a high fever, she became delirious, her milk dried up, and those around her feared for her reason.

In her intervals of lucidity, she demanded details of Franz's last moments. She was told that the Imperial family, in order to forestall any charge of having poisoned Napoleon's son, had ordered a *post-mortem* to be held on his body.

The news was like a knife-thrust to Sophie. So Franz's

body, which was sacred to her, was to be handed over to the surgeons as their prey. In accordance with their dreadful procedure, it was to be cut open, dissected, dispersed: his heart here, his entrails there....

If she had been by his side, Sophie would never have allowed such a profanation. But alas, though only a few yards divided her from Franz, she had not even had the consolation of closing his eyes, of gently lowering those lids which had been reluctant to obey any hands but hers.

It was a long time before Sophie was restored to health. When she appeared again, doleful and depressed, people could scarcely recognize her. Franz seemed to have taken away with him all her gayety, all her charm, all her youth.

Prokesch was at Bologna, on his way back to Vienna, when he heard about Franz's death. He might have been struck by lightning. For several days he was prostrated.

Only a month ago he had lost Gentz. He was inconsolable.

"Just imagine his being dead!" he had said. "I shall always miss him, if I live to be a hundred."

Now Franz had gone the same way as Gentz. Prokesch had not been present when either of them breathed his last sigh. The injustice of it, the cruelty of it, filled Prokesch with rebellion.

He took ten days to cover the distance from Bologna to Vienna. As soon as he got there, he called on Metternich, Malfatti, Hartmann. He questioned everybody who had been present at Franz's death, down to the humblest servant.

Even then, Franz's death still seemed to him too unfair, too monstrous to be true. No details could convince him that he would never see Franz again.

All alone, on foot, he went over the route which Franz's

funeral procession had followed on July 24th. In imagination, he paced behind the hearse, covered with red morocco leather, on which Franz's coffin had lain. Six white stallions, richly caparisoned, had drawn it, and Wasa's regiment, Franz's own, had lined the route and formed the escort.

Not since Maria Theresa's funeral had so many people been seen in the streets. All along the route of the procession, women wept and men bit their lips. The Emperor Joseph II's equestrian statue was hung with spectators.

Prokesch reached the Capucins' church in the Neuemarkt. A low door stood open close to the porch. He went through it, and followed a long passage. A monk made his appearance, and preceded him in silence. The two of them came to a brass door. Over it, engraved in the stonework, was a single word: "*Kaisergruft.*"

Beyond this door, the two men went down a dark staircase until they reached the crypt. When his eyes got used to the darkness, Prokesch could make out forms lying flat in the shadows. They were the coffins of dead members of the Imperial family. The air reeked of mildew.

The monk made his way around the bronze monument to Francis I and Maria Theresa. Then, amid the copper coffins oxidized by time and damp, he pointed to one that looked quite new.

"There he is," he said.

Prokesch stood still and gazed at it. The coffin gleamed ruddily. A big trefoil cross adorned it. The inscription was not yet engraved upon it; but Prokesch knew in advance how it would read:

"To the eternal memory of Joseph Charles Francis, Duke of Reichstadt, son of Napoleon, Emperor of the French, and Marie Louise...."

Prokesch was surprised that he felt so little emotion.

He recalled that Franz had died on July 22nd. What a poignant coincidence! Fourteen years earlier, to the very day, the Habsburgs had robbed him of his name, as they had already robbed him of his crown. Eleven years earlier, on the same date, Foresti had told him about his father's death.

And now, there he lay in his last sleep, in the white uniform which he had found it so hard to wear, subject even in death to the servitude which Fate and man's inhumanity to man had imposed upon him.

Prokesch recalled how the poor body of the friend he would never see again had been martyred....

Franz's body lay in this crypt. But his entrails rested in Saint Stephen's cathedral, and his heart in the Augustines' church. Finally, another profanation had been added to that which custom required.

After Franz's death, his body had been left unguarded. People had brought scissors and cut off all his hair for keepsakes.

Prokesch also remembered Franz telling him that one day he had come down into this crypt with his grandfather. The Emperor said to him:

"Here I shall come and rest some day."

"And I?" asked Franz.

His grandfather hesitated before he replied:

"You, too... perhaps."

Since then several years had passed. The old man was still full of life, while his grandson of twenty was dead....

Yet, in the depths of his heart, Prokesch knew for certain that his friend was not dead. Death meant final blotting out. It could come only with forgetfulness in the hearts and minds of those who had known him.

Prokesch had within him so many memories of Franz, kept fresh by his faithful affection with every beat of his

heart, that out of them he could create many a life and give it to his friend.

There in the crypt, he summoned Franz up before his eyes, with his youthful face, his slim, tall figure, the dignity of his bearing, the grace of his movements.

Once more he saw Franz's curly hair, his luminous brow, his cheeks aglow with the flush of youth, his eyes in turn clouded by melancholy and bright with hope.

How intelligent Franz was, how wise in his ambitions, how reasonable in his plans, how spontaneous, how sincere in his affections!

Prokesch could still hear him saying, with outstretched hands:

"In your heart and mine there is no room for pettiness."

He remembered how, after Franz's death, Sophie's son, little Francis Joseph, had persisted in saying:

"No, no, nice Franzie hasn't gone to sleep."

A sob rose in Prokesch's throat. He laid his hands on Franz's icy copper coffin.

"Franz," he murmured, "your life begins anew; and the pity of mankind will make it eternal."

THE END

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